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NEW YORK CITY

WIFE'S MESSENGERS.

1881

BY

MRS. M. B. HORTON.

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THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

TO ALL THOSE

WHO, IN READING IT,

ARE WILLING TO SEE THE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

IN WRITING IT:

AND WHO ARE GLAD TO ACCEPT

THE TRUTH IT ILLUSTRATES

WITHOUT CRITICISING THE IMPERFECT FORM

IN WHICH IT IS PRESENTED.

THE WIFE'S MESSENGERS.

I.

MRS. HAMILTON was a widow lady of wealth, fine person and prepossessing manners. She was dignified, without pride, and still young-looking, although for many years she had been left with the sole care of her two children and a large establishment. Her hair was still dark and glossy, her eye bright and her smile cheerful; which left no impression upon the minds of her admirers of a sad widowhood or years of lonely responsibility. She had kept herself young by making herself the companion and confidant of her children; and so old age really jogged her elbow with a rheumatic twinge before she was aware that it had been for some time stealthily approaching.

She had won a host of friends by her neighborly kindnesses, and she was the idol of her own family; consistent in all the duties of home, she was at the same time faithful to the duties of society; both motherly and fashionable, she could unbend to a dance with her children while their governess played for them, and could "receive," with elegance, as the owner of a large estate, the thousand friends who did not all love her for herself alone.

She went to church every Sabbath to show her respect for the temple of the Most High and for the minister who preached there, and did not allow her mind to wander from the words she heard, that she might show by her attention to the service that she came to hear and not to see. While in her pew at church she made a noble effort to forget her wealth and position, and to feel poor before the riches of Heaven. But this constituted her religious experience; she never deeply investigated the mysteries of spiritual life, because she was not in the love of truth, which, when studied, gives a genuine impulse to the soul and a new beauty to everything of earth.

Yet she was happy, inasmuch as she was educating her children, as far as she could, to habits of mind which gave them freedom and strength, and by her example making all meanness and selfishness distasteful to them. She could not explain a single mystery of life, to which their eyes were beginning to be opened, for everything of that sort was a dead science to herself, but she gave them masters in all natural sciences, and every enjoyment that money and home-order could bestow; leaving the "mysteries" to the Church, where she hoped the children might some day become better enlightened than, she confessed to herself, she had ever been.

In fine, Mrs. Hamilton was like so many in the world—womanly and true in every outward duty, but never looking very deep within to see if there were more of earth than heaven there. Still, she was greatly superior to most in this large family circle, for laces and jewelry, servants and horses, houses and lands—which satisfy so many smaller souls—affected her only

as every-day things, which she enjoyed, and not as company things, for show and not for use. She did not understand the value of money, because she had never needed it; and not having any care about it, she lost the idea that it was the root of all evil, and with it the greatest evil of riches—pride. She believed that in her children was centred her greatest wealth; and here she was proud, indeed! A mother-millionaire.

Her only daughter, Cornelia, was, at the opening of our story, just eighteen years old. She was at that age when childish ways begin to be put off, and all the graces of the woman begin to be put on; when the words which have been spoken without thought begin to mean something of life, or death, according to the affection which gives them birth; when the innocence of ignorance is passed, and a new state is opened, in which the rational mind begins to learn, as it were, of itself; when a new world is discovered, poetical or prosy as the mental constitution and surroundings of home may make it appear.

It was in the constitution of Cornelia Hamilton's mind, and in the nature of her surroundings, to make this world, opened at eighteen, appear as a very poetical one. It was to her a world adorned with silver and gold and diamonds, and every pleasant thing. When the eyes of her young intelligence first opened upon it, she would scarcely have believed that in some parts of New York there was heavy, wearisome prose, and that many a girl and boy, down in its narrow streets, might never know what poetry was, or dream of the diamonds and other pleasant things, so full of rainbow colors, that were common to her up town. The knowledge of this heavy atmosphere

of prose would have darkened her own blue sky, without lifting the cloud for them; so perhaps it was quite as well that she could laugh and sing in ignorance of it all. But this poetry of hers, and of others like her, was not altogether from the world about her, nor from the natural constitution of her soul, gentle and lovely as it was. There is a rhythm of heaven with earth which makes the true poetry of the soul; and the angels alone can tell about these harmonies of God, which come with the new thoughts and affections of youth. A "creation," more wonderful than that of the sun and moon and stars, is then and there begun, and spiritual eyes alone can see "in the beginning."

Cornelia's face, so fair to look upon, and her graceful figure, rounding into maturity, owed their comeliness to the developing soul within—to those invisible eyes which see invisible things, this fairness and grace came from the growth of the "little child" so precious in the sight of heaven, which might, if cherished aright, come to the "stature of an angel."

There was no poetry or goodness to her in any thing that was not founded upon the True; so, in all her studies, she unconsciously received the living science which gives the mind energy and strength. Mrs. Hamilton was proud of Cornelia's "natural powers," as they are called, thinking that she might one day become an intellectual wonder, either in public or in private life. In this, however, she was at fault; for Cornelia never became famous in any way; her clearness and strength of thought were developing daily from the genuine love of truth—the daughter was simply seeking that which the mother was satisfied to leave unfound.

In person, Cornelia had changed so suddenly from the girl to the woman that she conceived an idea of having grown as suddenly to be uncommonly and awkwardly tall. So she bent herself a little—not without grace—toward the young companions who still retained their girlish stature. There was a peculiar charm in this slight bending of her slender figure, which affected strangers like deference and modesty; and as there was in her soft, hazel eyes nothing but the light of a child-like spirit, this impression was never dispelled.

There was in those eyes a tenderness for a whole world of mothers and brothers; but having to condense it all upon the two of her own household, they were overflowing with love for this mother and brother, who were all the world to her.

All the world? Not quite!

One day a young man appeared before Mrs. Hamilton, to ask if he could marry her lovely daughter. The mother, amazed that her child had become a woman, turned her awakened eyes from the one to the other, to be sure that it was not child's play, and with something like a sigh saw very clearly the unmistakable signs of the "grande passion!" She saw the resolve of the young man to win the young woman, with a becoming shadow of anxiety to soften his rashness; and she saw the resolve of the young woman to be won, with a becoming blush of modesty to soften her determination.

The mother's voice trembled, and her eyes were tearful, as she asked Cornelia "if she were old enough to be sure of judging wisely in the matter of a husband—if she were sure that her heart had chosen Robert Benedict to take the place of mother and

brother;" and Cornelia, as she stood by Robert's side, with her hand fast clasped in his, replied, as firm in spirit as in words, "Mother, I love Robert."

Then suddenly Cornelia left her lover's side, and, putting her arms about her mother, in whose face she saw an expression of sorrow and pain, she exclaimed, with tender earnestness, "Dear, darling mother! I shall never love you any less because I am fond of Robert. I love you very, very much, and shall always love you as I do now. Nothing can come between us. Oh, do not be troubled about me, because I shall trust in somebody beside you and Paul for my future happiness. I have"—and here she became a little diffident, or reverential, the listeners could not determine which—"I have—prayed, dear mother, that I might not make a mistake in loving Robert and promising to be his wife; and it seemed to me as if I not only answered as I love to answer, but as it was best to answer for both of us, when I said 'Yes,' to him, with your consent."

She was very lovely in her heightened color as she told her holy, virgin thoughts to these two, who might, or might not, understand them. They could not understand them as Cornelia did, but they felt the beauty of her trust in heaven; and Robert was quite content with her decision—that her "Yes" seemed best for both.

For several moments after this there was a thoughtful silence, in which a whole revolution of the mental world had taken place in the mother's bosom, from the night which had come upon her so suddenly at the thought of losing this sunshine from her home, to the brightness of their own day-dreams. Her inquiring

eyes sought the young man's very soul, to see if he appreciated the full and innocent affection of Cornelia's heart; and so well did Robert bear the gaze that Mrs. Hamilton did justice to his manliness at least, acknowledging to herself that it was a beautiful thing, this first affection of the man and the woman God had made to be joined together, and she was satisfied that she must not put these two asunder.

"Take her, Robert!" she said, at last; "she is my only daughter. No man can ever know what that means to a mother! Remember, Robert, that she is my only daughter, and after cherishing her for eighteen years, she loving me and being dutiful all that time, I have to give her up. You may feel like pouring out thanks to me now—I certainly hope you do—but thank me always, and be kind to her, for what I have given to you this day! She has never known a sorrow or a care. I know you would make promises now that she never shall, but *keep* your promises always and I will bless you. She's so dear, so very dear to me."

Mrs. Hamilton forced a smile as she saw the shadow of a cloud stealing over Cornelia's face at the slight accent of bereavement which crept into her mother's voice, and she continued, more cheerfully:

"I said, Robert, that she has loved me and has been dutiful to me all these eighteen years; you may be quite sure of her love, but have you given any thought to her dutifulness?"

Robert answered as all lovers answer in the early morning of their new day, which is, after all, a half-dreamy state: "I ask no dutifulness of Cornelia, only her love; duty is chilling, when my happiness is so glowing with her love and your consent. I don't ex-

actly understand the word myself, and I have no desire that my darling should be wiser than her lover. We understand that we have agreed to be very true to each other in the future, and that seems to be very satisfactory to both of us. We will study being dutiful together; will we not, Cornelia? But that comes after marriage, when I shall try to be really all that I am imagined to be, and my sweet young wife will simply prove herself to be what I already declare her to be—the best little woman in the world."

Cornelia returned his beaming look with a glance of devotion and trust, which said, "I know that you will prove all that I believe you to be."

And thus it was that Robert Benedict became the accepted lover of Mrs. Hamilton's youngest born—the very light of her eyes and joy of her heart.

Now, Robert loved Cornelia, as a young man of twenty-three might be expected to love such a dear, sweet girl; but he had no very serious thoughts of a useful and good life with her; he was satisfied with his engagement—very well satisfied—and he expected to have a very happy time when he should be married, which he meant to be as soon as he could gain Cornelia's consent. So, while Cornelia was thinking seriously, from day to day, of her life's work, and trying to talk it over with her lover, he was continually laughing at her "solemn ways," and winning smiles from her, in spite of herself, at his quaint sayings. She was not quite satisfied with this; but after the good-night kiss, the memory of her lover's clear and merry eyes bent upon her face with so much tenderness brought great satisfaction to her dreams.

Cornelia had another love, almost, if not quite, as

strong as her love for Robert; and this love was for her brother Paul. He was absent now in Europe, and although she missed him very much, she rejoiced with him that he was enjoying all the wonders of foreign lands, and could visit, as she had always longed to do, those long-buried cities whose stony shrouds had been lately cast aside to reveal the forms of the past. She little dreamed, however, of the secret motive for this journey—that, warned by his watchful mother, Paul had gone to see if a change of companionship would not do something to destroy the power of a habit which might end in ruin to all the noble qualities of his soul, bringing sorrow and disgrace to himself and the worst of griefs to his mother's heart.

It is said, by those who love it, that wine engenders a spirit of good-fellowship, and this makes its innocence; but Paul Hamilton was in the miserable way of loving the spirit in the glass better than the good-fellowship which it engendered; and so the wine lost its innocence to him, and became an enemy. With a mind full of genius and a heart full of the most generous affections, Paul Hamilton was in danger of clouding them altogether by self-indulgence. The mother's eyes had seen the gradual approach of this destroyer of her peace, and, with the most touching tenderness, she had pleaded with him to go abroad for a time, and so flee from the tempter, which she would not believe was enthroned within himself. Paul was too affectionate to resist this faithful and best of friends, and he was too reverent of the divine mystery of his better nature to cast aside a hope of reform; so he gave a grateful assent to his mother's plan of travel. Being independent of business ties, he immediately took passage in the

steamer for Liverpool, comforting Cornelia for his sudden departure with reasons which were quite satisfactory to her, as they had often talked together of traveling in Europe; which pleasure they would have enjoyed before this if it had not been for Mrs. Hamilton's dread of crossing the ocean. Cornelia forgot how much she should miss her brother, in his, and in her mother's apparent satisfaction in the arrangement; and so Paul went on his way across the sea, with the prayers of two loving hearts as an atmosphere of purity around him to keep off deadly plagues.

II.

WHILE Cornelia devoted herself with more zeal than ever to her mother, to compensate for Paul's absence, and gave all her spare time to Robert, —which was no very self-sacrificing gift—the voyager was winning all hearts on board of the steamer by his genial ways and conversational powers. He found the tempter on board in a number of sparkling forms; but, fresh from the altar of home, with its vows upon his lips, he had a kind of strength which served him all the way across. He managed to find the good-fellowship of his companions without resorting to wine, and became a favorite with young and old. No one could resist the flattering deference of Paul to the matter in which the talker was more interested than the listener could be; and, consequently, a companion always left him with a feeling of profound admiration, which often unconsciously sprung from gratified self-love. He had, without any thought of popularity, adopted the surest way of becoming popular: he never talked of his own affairs when any one else had something very important to say; he might be interrupted, but he would never interrupt: he was an attentive listener, because he understood very well that, as a general thing in conversation, the one who hears his own voice and gives out his own ideas is the one who enjoys the "interchange of thoughts" the most.

The great fault of Paul's character was a confidence in his own strength to conquer the vulgar evil which might in time undermine his splendid abilities and bring sorrow to his home. He had promised that he would never indulge to excess again, and he said to himself, in his pride of will, "I am too honorable and strong to break my word!"

O Paul, Paul! The strength of man, without the Lord's powerful arm to aid, can never ward off a single tempter watching for men's souls; with it, a thousand flee before a strong resolve.

After a pleasant voyage, which he described with enthusiasm to the beloved ones at home, comparing the ship to an isolated world of ease and enjoyment moving between the two continents, Paul landed on the other side; and it was in London—almost the very first point of his journey—that he met and fell in love with a beautiful orphan, named Alice Talbot, who lived with her uncle and aunt a short distance from the city, in one of the suburbs, which is far enough for country life, and yet near enough to make London of daily use.

The Miss Talbot who had so suddenly inspired Paul with a strong and genuine attachment was well pleased with him and his attentions. The agreeable qualities and manly appearance which had won the strangers on board of the steamer had a like effect upon this girl of twenty, whose heart had been waiting for just such a suitor. His letters of introduction to the friends at whose house she met him were of sufficient authority to establish his character and position in society; and there was no apparent reason why Alice should not love and be loved—or rather be loved and love, consid-

ering man's prerogative to be beforehand with the woman in the wooing.

After the passionate declaration, the tender reply, and the necessary formalities with the old people about their "consent," etc., etc., in all of which were involved the customary promises and blessings, and smiles and tears, Alice found herself the promised wife of Paul Hamilton. Having no time to spare, being *en route* for the Continent, Paul desired to be married at once, and take from the old people "their dear girl" to be the companion of his travels, much to their discontent.

"A sad day it was for them," they thought, "when this young man landed on English ground." But Paul thought it would always prove the most auspicious day in his calendar, and he wrote home the news with the following lover-like addendum:

"The young ladies who surrounded Alice at the party where I first saw her were far more elegantly dressed than she was, and more brilliant, perhaps; but there was about Alice an air of serious dignity which became her well, and it immediately attracted and charmed me by contrast with the gayety about her. I have found out that people call her proud, or a self-constituted saint, because she always makes a grand distinction in her manner toward a wise, good man and an elegant fop; also, because she never hesitates to show her taste for pure and intellectual conversation, as plainly showing her distaste for gossip or satire when they begin to lead. She has told me that it was a principle established in her character by the instructions of her mother that she should never indulge in a word that could by any possibility injure the feelings

or character of another; and although her natural temper inclines her to be critical and sarcastic, she remembers her dead mother's good counsel, and will not, with 'Divine help,' yield to her natural impulses.

"I always notice that this 'Divine help' is in all she says of her own efforts, as if she dared not take any credit to herself. It's pretty and feminine. Her uncle told me that her mother was very anxious and careful about her and her sister Helen, because she had long known that she should leave them before they were grown to womanhood. She had a weary sickness of consumption, and occupied a great part of the time, when she was comparatively strong, in teaching her children the very best things to develop their characters, so that they might be 'good and happy'—as the old man said, quite reverently—after she had left them to the temptations of the world. She died very happy, trusting in the well-regulated affections of her children. And it was very touching, dear mother, to have the uncle beg me, with tears in his eyes, to remember this that he had told me, so that I might not grieve his angel sister by troubling the soul she had watched over with so much care. He prayed me to treasure carefully his beautiful and 'good' darling, and I have solemnly promised him that I would do it. I will! For she is a woman I can always love—so strong, and yet so feminine—so meek, and yet so brave. Her heart shall never sink from any weight of sorrow that could come to it from my forgetfulness of the joy she brings to me. How much I love her I dare not tell you; it would be so near idolatry, which is forbidden."

And Alice was worthy of all the lover's admiration, both in character and person. She was the perfect

contrast of Paul in each. In character, she was firm in right because it was right, and the right was from God; she trusted in nothing but this Rock. The foundation of Paul's character was more like the sands spoken of in the Holy Word, because he trusted in seeing and doing the right from himself. In person, Alice was small, though well-developed, with all the rounded beauty of young womanhood; her face was not rosy or pale, but clear, as if a light from within gave a fairness to it, which would continue longer than the roses and lilies of more brilliant complexions. Her small and beautifully-shaped ears were always unconsciously exposed to admiration by the style in which she arranged her hair, which was carried back in one waving mass of natural curls, to fall over the back of her head; her throat and bust had that inexpressible charm which comes from the order of beauty in all things the artist loves in nature—roundness, and delicacy, and fair proportion. But a student of mind and body could see in her hands something that would tell of power, as well as of female loveliness, in the character of Alice Talbot. They were not large, but in repose or action they seemed to express a sentiment of work. And why not believe that they did? For some hands look all idleness—soft, jeweled hands, which appear to be for show, and afterward prove that this appearance is not deceitful. Alice's hands were not white and jeweled, yet they were well formed; and Paul thought that little, brown, well-knit hand, with the engagement ring upon it, was the most precious and beautiful thing in all the world for him to claim and hold. And all these things of the physical nature were as much in contrast with Paul as those of the spiritual;

for the lover was tall and dark-complexioned, with a manliness of bearing which made him acceptable in the sight of women, although not the "handsome man" of school-girl worship, notwithstanding his hands were small and white enough for a hero of romance, who owned "castles and serfs," and did no work. It seems so strange that while creation is so busy in its daily round of duties, speaking with such a living voice of the Divine activity which constantly creates and preserves, that there should exist a man or woman who can raise a throne for those "not obliged to work," and those thus elevated can be proud of it.

This was not the foolishness of Alice Talbot, notwithstanding the hands of Paul were those of a gentleman above the necessity of working for his daily bread. We shall see something of her thoughts and feelings about him in the following letter to her sister Helen, who was visiting an invalid cousin in the North of Scotland:

"My Dear Helen: Do not be too much astonished for your happiness or comfort of body when I tell you suddenly of my intended marriage with an American gentleman, named Paul Hamilton, whom I met at our friend Mrs. Holt's in London, and to whom I incidentally alluded in my last as a very agreeable acquaintance.

"I have known him but a few short weeks, but, I scarcely need to blush when I say it to you, Helen—and yet I do—I love him as if I had known him for years, and as if I could be true to him till death. He won my heart by the umistakable signs in his face of genius and goodness. Cannot we sometimes feel sure of

recognizing at first sight nobility of soul, sympathy and constancy? I believe, from my own experience, that it is possible; at least, I have acted upon this belief, and I am engaged to Paul with the most loving confidence in his ability to keep all the promises he has made me as a man and as a lover. You know what I mean by 'a man?' We have talked enough about what a real man is to have you understand that Paul pleases me most because he has all the internal as well as external qualities of a gentleman. I feel that his politeness is of his heart, and his conversation of a good understanding; so I trust my happiness with him cheerfully on account of these invisible things. I shall make him my husband in the faith that we shall help each other through sunshine and storm to that true union, which is like the type of all marriage—the Lord and the Church—the spiritual union, which is of the INNER LIFE. Pray that it may be so in the end, dear Helen, even if it come through care and sorrow. Our mother in heaven help me to her own sweet patience in all the ills of life, that I may keep near to those who have come gloriously out of great tribulation!

"You must not think of coming home to help me in my preparations, for they will be very slight. Paul says he cannot wait for anything very extensive, and it is of no importance, this wedding trousseau, which usually takes so much time and thought. He has delicately intimated to me that, as his wife, he can order my wardrobe when we reach Paris, and thus save me all anxiety and expense. I am not too proud to have him do this, as I see he would be grieved if I objected; besides, you know that we are not rich enough to purchase such a bridal outfit as I know Paul would like.

I shall do all that is simple and proper before we are married, and leave it to Paul, as he desires, to do as he pleases about the suitable elegancies. If I should attempt any thing more than this, I should be sure of a failure. He talks a great deal to me of his mother and sister, and has their photographs with him, so that I am sure that they are very elegant; but beyond this I cannot judge. Of course, Paul, from affection, speaks enthusiastically of them; but one day I shall know for myself. I can never exactly love anybody for Paul's sake, which is generally considered the duty of a wife, in a poetical way; for, as well as I love him, I cannot take his likings for mine, only as I see that they are just. I do not think, however, I shall have any differences in this case, for in Mrs. Hamilton's letter to me, after our engagement, there was so much sense and good affection for Paul that I was very agreeably disappointed, after hearing of her as a woman of fashion, fastidious in all the rules of society, although, I believe, quite faithful at home.

"I repeat it, my dear Helen, that you must not leave Rose while she depends upon you so much, as we understand each other too well to let any doubt about motive come between us. You are of very great use where you are, and I know you love me. If I do not see you, I shall feel the sunshine with which you fill the sick chamber, and shall hear the wishes you offer for my best good.

"Your loving ALICE."

Helen wrote to both Alice and Paul in reply, acquiescing in the painful necessity of her absence from the wedding; but bidding them both remember that she

was the most deeply interested of all, after themselves, in the bridal preparations, and they must keep her well informed of their progress, so that she might be with them in her thoughts. She expressed to them, in the most touching language, the love she felt for Alice, and the trust she had, through Alice's judgment, in Paul—praying that their lives might be made just so happy by outward circumstances as to bring them to the true happiness within. But she said nothing of the bitter tears shed in secret, and almost uncontrollable for the time, over the loneliness she felt, now that the only one left to her was going away to a new home, new duties, new loves. Helen gave up selfishly at first to the distress of parting with the sister who had been all her life like a second self; but she put this grief away at last, so that she could see the brightness of Alice's hopes and sympathize in them. She little realized how closely her future life would be linked with this sister, from whom she seemed to be separating, and this brother, she scarcely expected to see.

The dear old uncle and aunt, who had been the guardians of the orphan girls since their mother's death, had a great deal more anxiety about the future of Alice than her own trusting heart dreamed of cherishing; for they knew more of man and the world which she had such trust in than she could have with her inexperience and former quiet life. And although they would not have held her back, they felt their hearts trembling with fear when she went out in her white garments with a stranger's arm around her to face the joys and sorrows of the world.

Paul saw and understood the old people's gaze, fixed in half-tearful anxiety upon his bride. He knew that

they were thinking of trouble and tears that might come from this apparently happy marriage. But he had such strong confidence in his will to keep him safe in all temptation, now that he was so blessed, that he truly believed the old people would have occasion to rejoice that Alice had become his wife—he had such large views of all that he should do to make her happy.

Proud of his wife's peculiar loveliness, and more and more in love with her purity of character, Paul traveled through France and Italy, making a stay of several months in Germany, and enjoying everything that was offered to mind and eye. His heart was like a child's in its belief in universal sunshine and ignorance of storms. He believed that the world was a Paradise, with Alice and himself strolling through it, hand in hand, talking of its flowers and tasting its fruits. Oh, what a happy Adam he was, and what a lovely Eve was his companion! Was there a serpent in this garden, which would some time tempt the man and not the woman?

Paul's letters to his mother expressed his happiness and his resolution to be worthy of his dear young wife; and Mrs. Hamilton, the elder, rejoiced over this good news, which promised a crown of peace to her old age.

III.

WE give here an extract from Cornelia's journal, which tells its own story:

"Twenty years old and to be married to-morrow! A little while ago and I was a school-girl, anxious about my weekly composition and almost crying over those hard Latin rules. Now, all these things belong to the Past. What will the Future bring to me? Will it bring more difficult things to write and harder rules to learn? Will it be all sunshine, as the Past has been, or will it be cloudy sometimes, as I have heard that the matrimonial sky is apt to be? It appears to me now that it will be all sunshine, as I believe it appears to all young ladies about to be brides; and why should I trouble myself about the clouds until they come? Even if they do come, there is always the sunshine after; so I shall have some to rejoice in always.

"I cannot realize that to-morrow I shall be a wife! That after to-morrow I shall have to put on the dignity that should belong to Mrs. Robert Benedict! That before twenty-four hours have gone over my head, Dr. Roswell will have said to me that I must 'love, honor and obey this man' who will be pronounced my 'husband.'

"I wonder if that will simply mean that I am to be very fond of Robert and always have my own way?

(to which meaning, I am sure, my bridal veil and orange flowers will bow an agitated but graceful aquicescence), or am I to understand by those solemn words that I must always, either gracefully or ungracefully, bow my head in 'I will submit,' for the sake of peace?

"When the dear rector congratulates and kisses me after the ceremony, will it be because he sees that I am to be perfectly happy as Robert's wife—as Robert says that he intends I shall be—and is very glad for me? And when he places his hands so tenderly upon our heads in blessing, will it be because he is sure that now all our little misunderstandings are over? Or will his kiss be one of encouragement, saying, 'My dear little bride, always look on the bright side of things when troubles come, as come they must and will;' and his blessing be upon our heads, because they will need protection from the showers that will pour down upon them while walking the Elysian fields which we think lie open before us? I have no doubt that, after his experience of life, he thinks that we shall have very soon to change our wedding, gala dress for the good, substantial garments of forbearance, self-sacrifice and faith; and put on the thick shoes of patient trudging, as best fitted for the journey before us over stony roads and up steep hills.

"There is, after all, something very serious in the idea that Robert and I are to take each other for better or worse, and promise before witnesses that we will be very good to each other, no matter what happens to either of us that is vexing or disagreeable. I wonder why it is that so many are disappointed after they are married? It must be that the bow, that was so easy and graceful at the altar, grows stiff by degrees, and at

last the head won't bow at all. I must counsel myself to beware of the first stiffness of the neck—always bow to Robert with dignity—not servile submission, else you will lessen yourself in his eyes; and never assert your own independence if a quarrel, which is worse than dependence, must be the result.

"Very good advice to give Cornelia Hamilton on the eve of matrimony; let not 'Mrs. Benedict' forget it!

"What excitement and expectation there is about the wedding day—that wonderful *to-morrow:* If the weather will be pleasant?—if the rooms will be too full?—if everything will go off well? All through the circle of our relations and friends there runs an electric current from the battery of our wedding intention. Master Brown, belonging to my Past—in the composition department—would be pleased with that last fancy of mine, combining, as it does, the poetic and the scientific.

"These friends and relations have probably discussed very fully Robert's and my mental attributes and qualities of heart. How I wish we could gather up these different views, and have a pleasant time together in 'seeing ourselves as others see us!' I believe that we should get so confused over the various conclusions arrived at that we shouldn't be able to see ourselves at all!

"It is known, of course, by this time that we are going to housekeeping; and it is most likely that Robert's income is decided upon, although his future wife is entirely ignorant of its amount, and does not desire to be enlightened. Her housekeeping duties begin when the orange flowers are withered, and she will be obliged to

look after her dinners and the general interests of her liege lord. Some people say that she will have her hands full when she comes to this; but Hope whispers the same flattering tale that she has whispered in every bride's ear since the creation of the world, and mentions particularly, that dinners are of very little account when there is a trusty cook in the kitchen, and that husbands are very easy to get along with when they are as excellent as Robert promises to be.

"Now, I have the greatest confidence in Hope, because it has all my life kept its word with me; and I will have nothing to do with those disappointed authorities, who have, no doubt, brought all their sorrows on their own heads by injustice to their cook or their (so-called) lord and master.

"Let me see—'lord,' 'master,' 'head.' I like 'head' best, decidedly. But even this, that looks so innocent when written down, has been a great source of trouble, I can readily believe. I mean to convince Robert that two heads are better than one, and illustrate the idea every day in my domestic life. He shall be head of the financial department, and I of the home bureau (such a wise bureau as I mean to be!), with consultations in times of business or domestic panic, when the common good requires our united wisdom. And this shall be the opening of a new era to womankind, which has been so long distressed to knows its 'rights.'

"But I really begin to feel very serious. Light thoughts of hope and happiness are playing through my mind like winged creatures—'spiritual fairies,' I think, they might be called; and yet a nobler kind of spirits seem to be sitting and talking together of higher

things in a more secret chamber of my heart. I do not understand what they are trying to tell me, but I feel encouraged to make the effort to be true and good as a wife to Robert, and help him to be more thoughtful.

"I can't even think one word against my precious mother, who has given me everything I could wish for in this world; but she never talks with me about these thoughts, which I often have of something higher and better than I know. She does not seem to see at all that underneath the happiness that I feel—that I must feel when cared for and loved as I have always been—there is often excited a feeling of dissatisfaction and doubt—a feeling that such a life as mine is but pleasant play, which has in it nothing of work to make me good and strong. I can't believe that we were born merely to educate our minds and dress and drive to Central Park. Is this the 'noble life' we hear about from preachers and books? I long to understand what it is I really want—what it is that so puzzles me within myself! Being satisfied, and yet not satisfied—not believing myself to be very wicked, and yet knowing that I must be, because I don't know how to begin to repent, neither of what to repent. Dr. Roswell tells me I mustn't love myself and the world, and yet I don't see how I can help it, when I must take care of myself, and the world is so beautiful. The Lord made me, and He made the world; and yet I am told that they are very bad, and I shall lose heaven if I give my heart to them. Now, if I could only tell how to arrange these things—myself and the world and heaven—I should 'experience religion;' but I can't until my mind is clear about it. I can go forward and TALK of my renouncing the vanities of life, but I sha'n't un-

derstand a word I am saying; besides, I shall live in the vanities just the same, if being rich, and dressing well, and driving out in a handsome carriage, are vanities.

"Oh, dear me! Mother thinks that I only need wings to make me an angel; but if I had wisdom instead of wings, I am sure that I should be nearer heaven. I should like to be like the angels, more for knowing all they must know than for anything else. I cannot even imagine the happiness of understanding clearly about the soul—where the good thoughts come from, and the bad. Of course, the angels haven't any thoughts that are bad; but they must know from being taught in heaven where these thoughts came from when they were on the earth. But who are the angels, if the dead have not risen from their graves? There can't be any angels, after all. Or if there are some things called angels, they are not persons, and we can't have any thoughts of them, of course, because their bodies are not to rise till the resurrection day.

"The more I think about it, the more mysterious and dark it seems! Well, I must come back to plainer things or I shall lose my mind. Oh, if I could be helped! Will Robert ever help me? He is so full of life that I do not dare to say much about all these serious thoughts; and yet perhaps he will help me, by and by, when we grow wise and old.

"I am afraid dear mother isn't very well. She is cheerful, to be sure, and busy about a thousand things, but I imagine that she looks quite pale. Perhaps she feels anxious about my marriage. Robert is not her lover, and she sees with her large, penetrating eyes that he is not quite perfection, and this may give her a

fear for my happiness. I know that Robert isn't perfection; but everybody says there isn't such a thing on the earth as a perfect man; so, why should mother expect it, or be anxious about anything that is the rule. It is nice to begin with knowing that Robert isn't perfect; for I should be sure to be disappointed after we were married if I believed he were. I think it is best to enjoy all the good he has, and have the expectation of growing better together.

"What happy letters we are having from Paul! I wish that he could be here to-morrow, and bring home to us that lovely wife he is so enraptured with. I never heard of anything so above the troubles of the world as their affection for each other. And they are both so intellectual, beside. Alice's letters are worthy of being published, they give such new impressions, from her happy style, of places we have read about again and again.

"Dear Paul! I am so glad for him. I am so glad that he has chosen one we can love; for I am sure, from her pictures and her letters, that we shall love her; and this will make Paul happier, if it is possible that he can be.

"But why is it that while I write something comes over my mind, like a cloud of sorrow or anxiety? I feel, as they say that animals feel, terror of an approaching storm when the sky is cloudless overhead. I am tired, perhaps! My nerves have been excited all day long, and I have written this long, long journal.

"And now, with one farewell word to Cornelia Hamilton, I will go to bed.

"My dear, we have had a pleasant time together

for twenty years; but, really, I have no pain in parting, for I hope to have a still happier and, I hope, still higher companionship with the Mrs. Benedict of to-morrow."

IV.

THE "to-morrow" was as perfect as sunshine and pure air could make it; and St. P——'s Church was open for the fashionable crowd in due time, to have it filled as never upon a Sabbath day, with eager, heart-devoted worshipers—of what? Every pew was crowded with devotees, decked in the signs of their order—jewels, feathers, laces, ermine. It was a brilliant sight, indeed! So thought, in poorer language, the lower class who stood upon the outskirts of this world and saw it revolving in rainbow colors before its greedy and astonished eyes.

Sure enough, a fashionable wedding is one of the most brilliant and exciting things in the world. The elegant equipages driving up to the door of the church —the descent of exquisite toilettes, encompassing the wife or daughter of some moneyed man—the graceful hurry for a seat which would command a favorable view of the bridal pair—the backward and sideward turnings at every sound—such wonderful mental condensation of the female mind upon the material, cut and finish of dresses in neighboring pews; and such penetrating criticism of everything that is false and true in coiffure, complexion, form, of the dear friends about them. Really, there is great danger of all this show and preoccupation of mind having an influence

to make all these people forget that the Divine law of marriage is about to be acknowledged by two immortal beings, whose lives will be affected by this sacred act both on earth and in heaven.

In all great cities the fashionable weddings are becoming more and more brilliant, and less and less in harmony with that marriage in Cana of Galilee, where the Lord gave wine. The glory of the Lord should fill His temple upon such an occasion; but this seems to be in danger through the devices of man. God and Mammon are so wonderfully mixed up in the holy place that the distinguishing features of the heavenly are almost lost in the putting forward of the earthly. The priest is the visible minister of the invisible God, who joins together what man shall not put asunder. Here we seem to have something tangible, that we can see belongs to the heavenly. It is God's work performed in His own house; it would seem proper, then, to put something of holiness even into a fashionable wedding, which, by Divine right, belongs there. Perhaps the fashionable world will look upon this consideration of the subject either as old-fashioned cant or as modern transcendentalism—this raising up the priest and the altar above the level of natural things. When the fashionable world looks more to the priest and the altar than to the outward belongings of marriage, there will be fewer miserable homes.

Mrs. Hamilton thought a great deal of having everything "go off well," and, as a woman of the world, was pleased, as she entered the church, to see such an array of friends, whose toilettes she could not stop to dissect, but knew they were elegant from the transient glimpse she caught of them in passing up the aisle to

her place. But all the mother rose yearningly within her when Cornelia, with her bridesmaids, and Robert, with his groomsmen, arrayed themselves before the altar for the sacred ceremony. The simple mother-spirit left the fashionable world and reverently bowed before the God of heaven and earth, praying for his blessing upon her daughter's head. Stripped of all her wealth, she stood, a poor and trembling woman, before the Power which seemed to her could make her darling happy in her married life. She never gave a thought to that which had filled her mind for months—the satin and tulle and veil and wreaths of bridesmaids and bride; she forgot what was to be their effect upon the crowd looking on—if all her arrangements were proving a "success." All that was unreal faded away before the real. Her only daughter, who had never known anything of care or sorrow, was given away that hour into the hands of a man who could never be the tender guardian she had been to her child. Her love for Cornelia had always been like the unclouded sun. No one could tell how many dark days might be the young wife's lot from her husband's indifference, unkindness or want of sympathy! She felt that there was need of prayer to some Great Being—at present a somewhat Unknown God to her—but a Being who was called "Father," and could, therefore, understand her love for a child—that there was pressing need of this superintending Power when the future was all uncertainty, as far as human eyes could see. And so she lifted up her soul above the earth and tried to be a child before this Power, hoping that her reward for this would be a smile upon the fortunes of the dear young bride, which would make her rich in every human joy. Mrs.

Hamilton's heavenly state of mind had rather an earthly bias.

But Cornelia was the real child in spirit. After the flutter of having her dress arranged in the vestibule, she, too, forgot the fashionable crowd, and entered into the holy sanctuary of marriage with reverence for its Great High Priest; and when she knelt for the rector's blessing, after having been pronounced the wife of Robert Benedict, she bent her head for guidance toward a good life and a protection from evil which the world could not see, because the world was not in the same spirit. This was in harmony with God's house; and the company of angels, who know and love what marriage signifies, could approach this little child, who was a great way off from the brilliant world about her, and, all unseen, surround her like a wall of fire, in their zeal to ward off evil. She was in this heavenly company until the bridal cortége had passed from the altar to their carriages, when Cornelia was brought back to her "companion for life" by such passionate words as were in keeping with Robert's delight.

"My wife!" This was Robert's worship. It had been with him all through the ceremony. This was the only angel he cared for having near him. He was quite satisfied with the crowd of friends about him, and walked with conscious pride down the aisle to the door which he had entered as an unmarried man. He ran this gauntlet of eager eyes without being absent a moment from the present place, because it satisfied him so well. And on their way to Mrs. Hamilton's house, where they were to receive their friends, the loving words which were spoken and listened to joyfully were altogether of the present time and place, as it

was quite in keeping with bridal happiness that they should be.

To describe a "reception" would be quite unsatisfactory; so we will let its music and flowers, its splendid entertainment, and especially its compliments, which would weary the newly-married pair if there were not always so much that was true mingled with the false—we will let these all go by with other gay visions in the memory as brilliant and transitory as this wedding festivity.

The bridal veil changed for the traveling bonnet, the bride took leave of her mother and her mother's house, and went on her way with her bridegroom, both of them full of those new and happy emotions which make the bridal journey always stand by itself as the very poetry of life.

Henceforth they were to be "one;" and how "one?" The glorious sun, which unites the two great attributes of heat and light, is the daily exponent of the true marriage tie. As one, yet formed of two, it works out such great results with such quiet power that the eye is dazzled by its glory and the mind astonished by the wonderful things which science reveals of its creative and sustaining influence. By day and by night, in winter and in summer, we know that the light and the heat walk abroad together over the great solar way and do their work, each at the command of their Creator, whose wisdom and love are their source. If the heat should work alone, a horror of darkness would be upon the face of the earth, and hence no living thing. If light, without heat, should be active, then there would be a horror of cold, with no vestige of life upon the frozen ground. But, united as they are in the glorious

marriage bond, the paternal heat and the maternal light bring forth children—earth and sea. Sometimes, because of the unreceptive ground, or the perversion of these beneficent influences, the children are unsightly or unhealthy; but day by day the married "one" goes on its work of use.

In this wonderful union is there any rivalry of power? Is there any question of difference between the use of the light and the use of the heat?—between the "I" and the "Thou" of the paternal and maternal attributes? Is not the glory of the one equal to the glory of the other? And yet the glory of the one is as different from the glory of the other as the use of each is different. Can we choose between light and heat? Between the horror of darkness and the horror of cold? Both the wise and the simple answer, "No!"

Then we can never tell which is the first in the marriage bond as we come down to the smaller, and yet greater, world of home. The sun of this domestic world should be the husband and wife as a "one." In the highest celestial sense of relationship which unites these two, the man and father should be love, which is typified by heat; and the woman and mother should be truth, which is typified by light. This should be the central influence, creating sons and daughters both of earth and heaven.

V.

THE cloud that Cornelia had questioned herself about the day before her marriage came over the Atlantic, and broke in a tempest of tears over the house which, six months before, had been so gay with the wedding celebration. The following letter from Paul Hamilton's wife will tell how dark the cloud was in its rising, and how she grieved that it would lose none of its blackness as it spread across the sea:

"MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER: I am quite like one stricken speechless. I seem to have no life at times—as one who has had a deadly wound. I AM stricken, and have come near death. Oh, mother of Paul, how can I tell you the terrible news! I am so sorry that I have to bring suffering to you; and yet we must bear this burden together—this loss of our joy in Paul—this loss of him not in the body. Paul has left me! Do not cry out despairingly, as I did, and would not be comforted; for although these are cruel words, we love him still, and we hope for him through all.

"Yes, Paul has left me; and if it were not for my trust in the holy declaration that Providence knoweth when and how a sparrow falleth to the ground, and even has a greater care for man's smallest way, I should believe that I was left desolate in the earth and there was no kind Father above. It is this trust alone

that makes me hope for Paul and for myself. I loved him next to heaven, and he loved me—oh, I know he loved me! And yet he has left me. I would rather know where his mortal body was lying cold and dead than to feel the anxiety of my ignorance about the unknown ways he is following now. And yet I try to say, 'Thy will be done!'

"My husband has fallen a victim to that weakness which has ruined so many less noble men. He visited London often while I was unable to walk with him, as I used to do; but he always returned to me early in the evening, as if he were glad to be near me. I know that he was impatient for the birth of our child, that he might bring us home to you; yet he affectionately sympathized with me in my desire to have my dear guardians see Paul's child and mine. I was very, very happy in this waiting, for Paul was so devoted to me. I was not troubled that he made frequent but brief visits to London, where, he said, he had formed some new and pleasant acquaintances.

"One evening he did not return—the next day and another evening—and still another. I grew sick at the thought of danger or death. My uncle searched for him; but it was not until after six days and nights of loneliness—so dark and terrible that I thought the whole world was mourning—that I received the following letter from Paul, telling me of his safety in the body, but of his remorse and despair:

"'*My Poor Unfortunate Wife:* You have always said that my countenance was the index of a high-toned soul. Would that I had died while you said it. It bears the impress of a demon now. I am quite despairing enough to take away my life as a blot upon

the earth; but I have caught something from your pure spirit in living with you these happy months (passed, O God, all passed!) that gives me a fear of such a dreadful deed. I have resolved not to take my life; but I shall die a more cruel death in banishing myself for ever from all that is truly life to me.

"'Alice, I am a drunkard! Call it by what name they may, I am a drunkard. Despise me, Alice—call me a villain—for breaking such a pure and trusting heart as yours—call me an unnatural son, a cruel brother—call me anything that language can shape into accusation or reproach—I deserve it all. It is all in my own sharp conscience! Words could not be written that would fully express my self-condemnation. I am glad that my guilt seems to me like iron, so black and hard; for otherwise I might try excuses that might appear to lighten and soften it. I make no *excuses*—I have not quite lost my mind. To leave an angel's side and associate with the spirits of darkness! It would show that I was an idiot, as well as a drunkard, if I should attempt excuses for such an act.

"'I leave my features in your heart as they have been impressed there by your love and respect; you shall not have them effaced by a sight of my face after six days of self-indulgence. Could I live to see disgust in your eyes, even if your lips should be silent?

"'My wife! my darling—oh, my heart will break!—good-bye! My polluted lips shall never come near your brow. The hand that has clutched the hell-enchanted glass shall never press you to my heart—the air you breathe shall not be made vile by the atmosphere my presence would bring to you. My evil presence would contaminate all the purity of home!

"'Oh, Alice! I deserve your scorn, but I am broken-hearted! Perhaps you will pity me—perhaps you will remember me even kindly—as a man suffering for the blight he has brought upon your life. I banish myself from you because I place myself so low and you so high. Remember me kindly for this—that, although I have been mad, I still am just.

"'I will hide myself in America, far from you. I will hide myself from all those whose looks and tears would be like daggers, continually opening the wounds my sin has brought upon me.

"'Oh, Alice, my darling! my agony is greater than I can bear in saying farewell to you and to my child, and to my happy home!

"'Bless me, Alice, even in the heart that I have so terribly deceived! And let me say once more, even in my vileness, that I am in very worship—as a guilty mortal might worship a saint—

"'Your loving, though wretched, PAUL.'

"Such was the letter, dear mother and sister, that I read with a breaking heart—loving Paul all the while, and remembering that I should be left without his strengthening arm in the trying hour that I felt was near at hand. That very night my little girls were born—twin daughters—who shall be angels of blessing to their dear father, if I have the power to teach them all those things which I am sure will bring him back to you and me.

"While I lay upon my bed, tenderly watched over by my dear uncle and aunt, I had a vision of my darlings leading their father home. It filled me with such joy that I awoke to believe it might prove a real joy,

although a joy so long deferred that it makes my heart faint within me to think that years may pass before I taste it! I know Paul so well that I am sure he will never come back from impulse or longing for the old affection. Believing himself to be brought very low in the sight of God and man, he will never renew his old relations with us until he is taught, in some rational way, that he has not really lost the noble stature of a man.

"I am certain that he does not love *evil better than good*, although for a moment his evil might have gained the ascendancy; he is altogether wrong in his view of the result. You must know better than I do if this love of wine was a besetting sin with him or not. I never suspected any weakness of the kind, and never knew him to associate with those who might set him an example he would be easily led to follow. There is a mystery about his self-reproach which I cannot fathom; his fall seems so sudden and his abandonment to despair so great, when he was so noble and good in intellect and heart! I must be quiet and wait!

"My purpose is to get well, and come to you with the children, that I may be in America, where Paul is going, and help him when he needs me, as I am sure he will some day. Will you let me come? And help me until we find him—watch over him, without his knowledge if it is best—and finally bring him home? Paul will never suppose for a moment that I would follow him across the ocean without a protector for myself and children, when he considered me too delicate in person and feminine in character to brave the world without his supporting arm. I always seemed to lean upon him because he loved to have me; he

may learn some day that I have another kind of bravery than simply telling the truth, which he has praised me for so often!

"Do not despair, dear mother, for *I* do not despair; and we will be brave together! Paul is no common man; he is enshrined in our hearts as a devoted husband, son and brother—one of the truest and best. He WILL NOT be lost to us.

"Write to me soon. I feel so strong, now that I have written to you all I suffer and hope; do not distress me by any doubt of my lovely vision that Paul will be brought back, or of your strength to help, for I should be hopeless then, indeed.

"Yours, more truly than ever, ALICE."

Mrs. Hamilton received the shock as a pleasure-house receives a storm of wind and hail: the beautiful vines and flowers—her summer joys—were torn away and scattered. But they left her open to the sun of heaven. A pleasure-house that is firmly built upon good, substantial ground will tremble, but will not fall, even as is the case with a better house that is built upon a rock.

Mrs. Hamilton's anxiety for her son, together with the excitement of the wedding, had secretly undermined her health; and this news from Alice gave a shock to her nervous system from which she could not rally. So she went one day from her cheerful drawing-room to her chamber, having taken, all unconsciously to herself and others, the last look of every familiar object associated with so much happiness. In shutting her chamber door that day she shut out the world for ever—the vines and flowers of her pleasure-house were

torn away and scattered. But the sun of heaven came flowing in!

She lingered, in a gentle and almost painless decline, long enough to welcome her son's wife and twin children to their future home. The meeting at her bedside was full of hopeless grief on the invalid's part, and tears, but wonderful composure, on the part of Alice. The face of the young wife was eloquent with the sorrow of her widowed life; but in her eyes there shone the light of those divine and comforting truths which she had studied as the best knowledge to be stored in her memory for just such a time as this. The first words that Alice spoke were words of eternal life; and they were so full of hope and earnest with true belief that their power was felt at once as something that could bear the mother's heart above all her suffering, and help her even in her bodily infirmity.

Angels are everywhere; and here came a helper to those invisible watchers at the weary and sick head as it rests upon the bed of death, who wait to lift the last thought to heaven, and afterward welcome there those who are released from the body and born into their own better world.

Alice's beautiful head, with its youthful mass of curls, contrasted somewhat strangely, but not unpleasantly, with the matured expression which the first shock of her grief had left upon her face. There had been a triumph of the heaven over the earth within her; and this had softened the first distress to a look of patient suffering, which won Mrs. Hamilton's pity and love. Such was Alice as she appeared upon the day of her arrival beside the bedside of Paul's mother, holding in her arms the little children, whose baby

murmurs struck a chord in the invalid's bosom that had vibrated long ago to the voice of her lost son.

With an uncontrollable burst of affection for these children of Paul, Mrs. Hamilton put out her arms to receive the dear little ones, exclaiming, with sudden strength, "Oh, give them to me—HIS children—dear, dear Paul's! Give them to me, that I may put them close to the heart that has idolized their poor, mistaken father!" And while Alice gently placed them in the extended arms, soothing the little cry which was made at this introduction to a stranger, whose manner was so excited and full of emotion, the invalid, with touching earnestness, called down the blessing of Heaven upon their infant heads; and then a smile of tender satisfaction spread over her face, such as had not been seen there since the news from Paul. She bent over each baby by turns, whispering fond words for themselves, or talking to them aloud of their father's goodness, which, before they grew to womanhood, would surely show itself to all the world: "My noble, intelligent, good boy! He has left you, little ones; but he will come back—oh yes, he will come back! I may not live to see it, but the day of rejoicing will come to YOU. What a blessed day!" And then she would kiss them and fondle them, as if to confirm by her love this pleasant prophecy. She would have kept the children resting in her arms, weak as they were, for hours; she said they strengthened her instead of wearying; but Alice, with gentle authority, declared that they must be removed. Mrs. Hamilton gave them up with a sigh, but afterward dropped to sleep with a smile upon her lips.

VI.

AT the first interview Cornelia recognized and loved a sister. She felt no fear of leaving her mother in such hands; and with her own household cares claiming her attention, she was glad that this new daughter had come to take her place. Alice was as much at home in a month's time, and as devoted to the invalid, as if she had always been an elder daughter; and her presence became as necessary to the sick mother as that of Cornelia; for she was wiser than Cornelia about the heavenly home which is prepared for the children of the Most High; and Mrs. Hamilton began to value this wisdom of Alice as she valued the affection of her youngest born.

Alice could very well keep herself out of the way of all visitors to the house, in the sick-room, where no one was admitted; and although some curiosity was excited by the report of a beautiful guest and her two children, yet it soon died away in the greater matters of interest constantly exciting the pleasure-seeking people of New York. And Paul, wherever he might be, would never hear of this guest, so soon forgotten; if he did, he would not imagine her to be his wife, whom he had left weak and suffering in her English home. Could he have realized that his forsaken Alice was now the sunlight of his mother's heart?

She was, with Cornelia also, the sunlight and warmth of every chamber of her soul. Alice had been so well educated in the inner, as well as outer things of life, that when the darkness fell upon her from without, the light of truth from within fell upon the cloud, and helped her to see if it must necessarily shut out all the sun of heaven or not. She saw by this inner eye that the Lord had not left her enshrouded in darkness, and so in the midst of tribulation she rejoiced in the Father's love.

The beloved and loving invalid gradually came under the power of this faith and affection. By degrees she opened her mind to the light, which was streaming down from heaven within, and to that which came through Alice, without, until the spiritual being who was so near the border of the better land saw her eternal home, and the Lord who is the glory of it. And in the end, the great wrong that Paul had done his mother brought about her greatest joy. The evil of his hands was overcome by the unspeakable mercy of the Lord, which is constantly turning man's devices into teachers of heaven. The well-disposed but fashionable woman would have averted the storm which Paul's misdeed had brought over their heads; the angels would have averted it, if Paul would listen; the Lord would have averted it, if Paul's freedom had not been sacred in his sight; but the storm had come, and the night. And there was the pillar of fire guiding through this wilderness, so dark and terrible, to the beautiful, holy land.

"They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

"Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

"Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

"And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

Mrs. Hamilton and Alice gave praise fervently for the goodness and wonderful works; and Cornelia, who came every day to visit her mother, began to understand how she could live at the same time in heaven and upon earth. She found at last the teacher she needed—a Christian, who had made heaven the first thing of her life, and had afterward enjoyed the good worldly things that fell to her lot; a believer, whose faith was from reason, not from a disconnected, unsatisfying theory of words, which have no life in them. This was living faith indeed!

As Cornelia sat one day, holding the invalid's thin white hand in hers—that motherly hand, which had performed for her so many loving and useful services—she thought to herself how peculiar the light was in the eyes that looked up to her from time to time. Alice was sitting at the foot of the bed, sewing upon a child's white dress, and Cornelia thought at the same time of her sister's spiritual beauty, as the colorless but lovely face bent over her work. Where did this light and beauty originate that she saw in this sick chamber? Here was sickness both of the heart and body, and yet no trace of suffering in her mother's eye, or in Alice's face, excepting lines of the old pain, that time had not yet effaced.

There, before her, was an illustration of the Lord's

far-traveling truth, which is the light of every spiritual house, for there, falling upon the floor, was the sunlight from the distant sun of the natural world. Was not that bright, cheerful sunshine far-traveling from its distant source? Had the fountain of material light and heat left its central position in the starry heavens, to come down to earth, to that very room? Could that sunshine be shut out without great pains and great determination?

If Cornelia had reasoned upon this natural order of the sun and earth, she might have understood, by lifting her thoughts still higher, how spiritual light, and heat, and beauty come down from that central spiritual sun, the fountain of all spiritual light and heat, which is wisdom and love. This infinite sun never leaves its heavenly dwelling-place to come down to earth; but high above every finite thing it still remains, while its glorious rays penetrate every soul which does not shut it out with evil will and proud determination. These rays the Father once centred in himself in human form—coming to the earth as the man, Christ Jesus.

The sunshine of both worlds made this sick chamber very pleasant. Love and taste had given every comfort and elegance to soften the natural gloom of sickness; the curtains and carpet were of the most delicate shade and texture; there were vases of beautiful shape, filled with flowers, and a quiet atmosphere pervading the room, which was far from sadness, although, today, Cornelia's tears were ready to flow, she knew not why.

She looked with new anxiety into her mother's face, but she saw no signs of change; the smile was sweet and cheering, which answered her daughter's eyes, as

she said: "You look at me, my dear, as if I were gone away, and you were calling me back. Now, my darling, I haven't felt so comfortable for a long, long time. Put away that anxious expression, to please me, and let me hear some pleasant talk."

Cornelia pressed the hand she held, and bending over her mother, kissed her tenderly, saying: "I don't know why it is, mother, but I felt just now as if you had left me suddenly, and I had such a yearning after you that it was like real pain. The feeling is quite gone now; and yet I do not think I am satisfied that you are as well as you were."

"Quite as well, my dear—even better, I believe. Everything seems well with me. Talk to me of the life in heaven, Alice."

"Oh yes," said Cornelia, earnestly, "talk of your heaven, which is so new and delightful to me—which you say is no state of glorious idleness, no unending hymn on golden harps, but a heaven of activity in good works. I am content to hear of such a heaven after the heavy burden in my belief of an eternal idleness—an eternity of praise to Him who never slumbers nor sleeps in the care and labor of His hands. The activity of the Infinite mind cannot find any image and likeness of itself, it seems to me, in a host of worshipers, whose angelic life is passive, with praise to Himself. He, filling heaven and earth with loving-kindness and tender mercies, and depriving His children of tasting His own great joy!"

"Cornelia, you have learned more than I have taught you," replied Alice, looking up with an admiring smile. "You are young to receive so clearly what your reason will more and more confirm. All revela-

tion reveals the wonderful activity of the spiritual world, the incessant work and progress of the human soul. If we believe in guardian angels, as we must from the Word of God, are they the only workers in heaven and earth, set aside from the numberless host who are simply praising God? Do they not praise Him most who do His will for ever?

"Oh, it is a comforting truth, that after our active lives on earth, we shall have uses to perform in heaven, and find our very heaven in doing good to others, as we find something of it here."

The invalid murmured "Blessedness!"

"True blessedness, indeed, dear mother," said Alice, rising to prepare some cooling drink for her patient, while an expression of holy satisfaction passed over her face. "Such blessedness as will make you strong, and bright, and joyful, after all your weariness." She raised the invalid to take the drink she had prepared, and kissed her forehead as she placed the head tenderly back again upon the pillow. "How can the heart of man conceive the joy of an eternity of duties well performed, without the earthly drag of bodily pain or selfish sorrow!"

Again the invalid murmured, as if the words came from her inmost soul: "Am I worthy of such unspeakable and lasting blessedness?"

Alice answered with the inspiration of a Christian who is able to teach through the power of a true faith: "If, in the soul, there has come a welcome to the Lord, who stands at the door and knocks—if the door has been opened, the everlasting gates lifted up, and the Lord of glory has come in, then the servant of sin (the master now, of his exacting and cruel enemy!)

has become the child of God, who shall surely see the Father's face and live for ever!"

"Alice, dear Alice, I have seen my Father's face in the cloud, and have heard His voice in the tempest through which I have passed! And your hand has helped me to open the door through which the Lord has come to me.

"You have been an angel of blessing to me. I stumbled in tears and darkness, and you strengthened my feet. I thank you, Alice, for all that you have done for me. Paul's mother blesses you, and prays you to have courage in the work you have commenced—to find her boy, and bring him back; his wanderings, I am sure, will end by your side; by God's help you have saved the mother to happiness, and by God's help, I believe you will save the son. Let me see the children, for I feel very faint; it may be death."

Alice went quickly out to seek the children, faint and sick herself with the sudden request and the look she caught of Cornelia's terror-stricken eyes. When she returned to the chamber with the children, who had been caught from their cribs, and yet not awakened by their mother's haste, Cornelia was upon her knees by the bedside, with the hand of Mrs. Hamilton upon her forehead, as if in blessing.

The dying mother faintly smiled as the children were placed upon the bed, where she could see them without exertion. She motioned Alice to kneel by Cornelia's side, and with a little effort, as if it were the last she could make, she softly said: "There may be power left in these poor hands to bless you both, my dear, dear daughters;" but her last tender, yearning look was upon the sleeping children, as if she took a

fond farewell of Paul. And then there was an expression upon her face which did not belong to earth; it brightened more and more, and the voice which the weeping Cornelia thought silenced for ever in this world, feebly but plainly murmured, "Tell my dear Paul, when he comes home to Alice, and these, my darlings, that his mother blessed him in her dying hour —that she cherished not a thought of any sorrow he had ever been to her—only the memory of his infant head upon her breast—only his fond boyish words; say the fondest words to him from me; comfort him with my blessing and warmest love when he grieves that I am gone; tell him that I was happy; bid him remember, when he sheds tears of penitence for his mother's wounded heart, that he was always more of a joy than a sorrow to her—that her last earthly look was upon his children, because she loved them for his sake; he will need all this. I hear—the voices of the multitude —who—have—passed."

Weaker and weaker grew the voice, and the words, with lengthened pauses between—and she was gone.

Locked together in each other's arms, Cornelia and Alice wept over their bereavement for a long time, silently; but when their grief was somewhat relieved by tears, and they came to look upon the face which had been so dear to them, the smile that rested there seemed to assure them of that "blessednesss" she had murmured of before she went away; and they were resolved to be comforted.

VII.

IN the steamer that bore Alice's first letter, telling Paul's mother and sister of his desertion, Paul Hamilton and Dudley Gordon took passage together for New York. The two sat talking in their state-room until a late hour the first night of their voyage.

A true idea of the difference in their characters can be received by their conversation; outwardly they were both fine-looking, with all the personal attributes of gentlemen. But one of them was subdued with shame; with his arms crossed upon his breast, and his whole expression of face and figure showing a dejection that would have been painful to any other companion—and the other was sitting upright, with his feet comfortably ensconsed upon a footstool of his own contriving, and his face, the apparent mirror of virtue, sympathy, and yet lightness of heart.

"What is the use of being so desponding, my friend?" said the latter, with an attempt to break with cheerfulness the oppressive stillness of the last half hour. "Don't let the disappointment of the world make a coward of you, for it is downright cowardice to sit there over such glorious wine with such a melancholy face, and with such sighs as any woman might be supposed to breathe when things go wrong; you are not a coward or a woman, are you, Hamilton?"

"I am worse than a coward or a woman, Gordon," Paul replied, despondingly; "I am a villain. Perhaps I am a coward, too, for I have done a deed that ought to make me afraid to look into the fair face of any woman I might meet."

"There are very poor opportunities on board this steamer to be troubled about looking upon fair-faced women," replied Gordon, with a laugh, "for, by my good name, I never knew that a British steamer would carry across the water so poor a freight of the beautiful in flesh and blood."

"It depends upon how we judge the beautiful," said Paul, becoming interested, unawares, in a favorite subject; "I admire beauty that every eye can see as well as any man—a beauty that will attract in passing, and make one turn upon his steps to gain another view of it; that is the kind of beauty that idle-minded and sensuous men worship, and throw away. There is another kind, more hidden, that I admire more; it is woman's sweetest beauty, the expression of her feminine qualities in the light of her eyes and in the lines of her mouth. There may be plain faces here on board that may be lovely with these charms.

"But, Gordon, when we see an innocent, pure soul shining through features which are beautiful in themselves, we must admire that woman, love her, worship her. How great a prize to win and cherish! Let no man recklessly cast such a treasure away if he value his soul's life! Oh, let no man recklessly cast such a treasure away!"

Paul half rose from his chair as he spoke these despairing words, shivering the glass he held in his powerful grasp, and spilling the wine upon the floor.

"Come, come, Hamilton," said Gordon, cheerfully, at the same time gently inclining Paul to his seat, "these are too narrow quarters for a tragedy walk, and this is too good wine to be wasted by tragedy emphasis. Do give up poetry, and be practical. Your kind of beauty and your kind of poetry are to be hunted for, and after they're found they do not pay. There is no real poetry anywhere, after all; it is a will of the wisp, it is a fantasy about which there are a great many words, but no substance. The world is a good sort of a place, to be enjoyed after one's own fashion; it is only filled with groans and tedious night-watches if one tries to put away his own ideas of ease and good-living for the sake of a phantom called 'the beauty and poetry of a true life.' I call that mental suicide for no good end. Come, fill your new glass with a bumper to this common-sense sort of a world that I am satisfied with, and drop your school-girl sentiments, which only make you miserable. I have had my day of youth and nonsense" (and here in his voice there was a shade of tender memory, which he could not wholly conceal), "but I am glad to say that it is past; all romance, poetry, sentiment of all tender kind. Our friendship, Hamilton, is manly and strong; all these little people of youthful dreams are dead and buried within me, and over their graves walks that comfortable and satisfied individual, SELF, with a firm foot and a high head."

It was after this fashion that the two talked on. In the fascinating, off-hand manner of Gordon lay the danger of his pernicious doctrines. The handsome face seemed cheerful and sincere, the peculiarly brilliant eye sparkled from what seemed to be an innocently jovial temper; and although Paul, even in his

distress of mind, caught, and wondered at for an instant, something in this expression that seemed like trouble or fear; yet it kindled again so immediately into humor, or into a sympathy with his own despondency, that he supposed it was all fancy, and so let it go.

While Gordon sat there, apparently doing his best to make that little state-room a cheerful place for Paul, he seemed like a good friend, anxious to win his companion from the sorrow of his thoughts by light conversation and good wine. But all the while his eye keenly watched every expression of Paul's face, as if from some secret motive he wished to see how he could best become his confidant, and gain a power over him through the name of friend. Was it for good or evil?

Paul was so paralyzed in all the chords of friendship that Gordon knew it would be very hard to stir any new emotion for himself,—he had sacrificed his best, his sweetest and his dearest friend; and there was a deadly chill at his heart, which it seemed to him would take more than mortal influence to warm.

The man who sat opposite to him with that bright, earnest eye had been with him in London when he had been tempted, had smilingly warned him against the "one glass too much," and yet was somehow associated with the temptation of that very glass.

Gordon had seen him helpless; he had looked carefully to his welfare, had remained with him all that night and all the night after, when he was beside himself with the thirst, and beside himself with the gratification of it. His friend had spoken cheeringly to him when the world had seemed like a grave, and

he had listened patiently when Paul had told him over and over again the story of his love and wretchedness.

In the very depth of his degradation of soul, Gordon had mentioned to Paul that he regretted that his departure for America at an early day would prevent his being of further use to him.

And he was to be left alone! The poor sufferer's mind immediately conceived the idea of leaving Alice and joining Gordon in his trip. The sense of his unworthiness ever to see his wife again had taken such strong possession of him that he could not shake it off; a fear of her scorn was mingled with it, and in all these states of mind, Gordon was his companion and kind adviser. He felt grateful to the stranger, and did not stop to question why he had kept so faithfully by him in his helplessness.

Weak and cold as he was, after this resolution to part from Alice so that he should not see the horror of her face at his appearance, an indistinct perception floated through his brain that this same kind stranger had engendered the fear of his wife's scorn, and had, in the brilliancy of his tirades against the world, shut down the gate that led to repentance and reform.

Thoughts like these even now passed through Paul's mind as the two sat together over the wine; and he could not escape them, although his gratitude and his bitter necessity of companionship made him careless of the doubt which had been excited.

The gentle dashing of the waves against the vessel's side seemed to inspire Paul with the idea of spiritual storm and spiritual peace. "How strong the waters were! Sometimes dashing high in fearful waves, and

then hiding their power in the billow when the tempest was passed. How easily does one forget the wreck and the suffering they have wrought when they come with their low murmurs to lave our feet and kiss the sands which they have just cruelly burdened with drowned men and spars of noble ships!"—The storm and the peace and the forgetfulness of ruin—Paul seemed to strengthen with the thought. And so he spoke. "Would it not have been braver, Gordon, to have met my innocent wife, and, throwing myself upon her mercy, have begged her to forgive me and keep me always by her side, so that I could not be tempted by evil? Certainly such angelic help could have saved me!"

There was a smile about Gordon's mouth as Paul eagerly asked this question, but it was quickly hidden by a habit he had acquired of curling his moustache about his fingers, perhaps for hiding too communicative smiles, or perhaps for showing his small white hand. At all events, the mouth was very serious in its expression after the momentary care of his moustache, and, as he filled Paul's glass, he replied, emphatically: "You did much better to consult your mirror, Hamilton; better do anything else than dare to try her compassion for such a countenance as you bore at that sad time; better leave your wife to mourn for you and pity you, for *pity* is no doubt *love* with her, than have your appearance as a gentleman, in intellect and person, entirely destroyed by such haggard eyes as you would have taken to her. Indeed, she would only have been a right-minded woman to have despised the man who could forget her acceptance of his name, and his obligation to keep it from reproach.

"You gave way suddenly and freely to the temptation you were too weak to resist in the beginning; and your handsome face gave unmistakable evidences that you had been very merry and very sick. No woman living, with any proper pride, could have helped herself from being shocked out of all affection if a man with such a face should have claimed the name of husband."

Gordon had brought Paul back for the twentieth time to his state of humiliation, and horror of his wife's contempt. And then he changed his manner, picturing the love which Alice might be cherishing for him at that very moment, because he had left her in such despair; and there was so much that was pleasant in memory to strengthen that love.

"How pleasant to think, dear Hamilton, that she is full of such sweet pity for herself and you; that you may not have lost a precious grain of her affections!"

This was soothing doctrine, indeed, for a banished, miserable man! And the gentlemanly, cool villain who had uttered it, had thrown out from his unhealthy soul another cord to bind his victim to him.

Alice might still love him because he was fleeing from her in his degradation and misery; and this was far, far better than being scorned at home, as it seemed he must have been!

"I thank you, Gordon, for the comfort you have given me, hard as it is to think that it is the only comfort I can receive. I am grateful that a stranger should have helped me so wisely to the only hope I have. There is not much warmth about me, but accept my thanks. I hope that your death-bed may be the happier for this kindness—a happy death-bed seems

to me now as the very best thing that I could wish you!"

That look of trouble or fear came into Gordon's eyes, of which Paul had caught a suspicion before; and for an instant they seemed to see some invisible thing that moved the self-possessed man strangely. But it was only for an instant, and again he was smiling and composed, lightly postponing the fulfillment of Paul's good wishes to a very distant day.

They sat up late that night, drinking deeply, as was usual now with Paul; and the latter retired overcome with wine, to awaken with renewed reproach and detestation of himself.

There was on board of the steamer a party of gentlemen, which had been formed by circumstances and harmony of purpose into quite a brotherhood of travelers. There were old and young in the party, but they were alike enthusiastic over their reminiscences of places they had visited together. Paul was very much interested in these travelers, as he caught from time to time in their conversation allusions to objects of interest of which Alice had been so appreciative on their happy journey. He was, in a few days, introduced to some of this party by the gentlemanly commander of the ship, who had become deeply interested in his intelligent but unhappy passenger; and under a false name, which he had been induced by Gordon to adopt, he attracted again, but in a more retiring way, the admiration and respect his fine qualities deserved. With one of this party, a Mr. Stuyvesant, who seemed to be looked up to by all the rest of his companions, Paul became almost animated in his conversations upon the history and poetry of the Old World and of the New.

This Mr. Stuyvesant, with his grand, broad forehead, bordered far back with silver hair, won Paul's regard and excited his self-respect. The gracious manner of this new friend gave Paul a consciousness of intellectual powers which did not lead to pride, but gave that encouragement to a desponding mind which aroused it to a sense of its real greatness. Paul dared to whisper to himself that he was not altogether degraded—that there was something yet within him that was noble and good.

Mr. Stuyvesant evidently enjoyed his society, although Paul's weakness was well known to the whole party; and he always paid a flattering deference to the fine talents which his young companion was induced to display. The kind old gentleman evidently recognized his worth, and desired to make a friend of him that he might save him from himself. This was like new life to Paul, and if Gordon had not always been at hand in that little state-room to charm him with those strangely earnest eyes, and guide him almost against his will by his fascinating words, Paul might gradually have been led by the fatherly kindness of Mr. Stuyvesant to a more healthy state of mind.

Gordon had found the power to affect his victim's intellect and affections by toying in his own ingenious way with Paul's one weakness; in no other way could he have blinded and led him. Over his wine Paul was lost, and all the influence of Mr. Stuyvesant, all the influence of his own good thoughts from the angels who sought to warn him, all were overcome by that convivial companion who had no sympathy with angels or good men, and yet had been a friend to Paul when he needed one most.

The youngest of the traveling party in which Paul had become so much interested was a nephew of Mr. Stuyvesant, a young student who had been obliged to give up his studies on account of his health, but who was returning to them again, refreshed and eager for work. He was frank and gentlemanly, but high-spirited, as his sparkling eye, when he was irritated, very plainly indicated. By some fatality (had Gordon's wit and ingenuity anything to do with this?) Paul was led into a wordy quarrel with the student upon a question of vertu, in which Paul warmly contested that young Percival had been most shamefully deceived.

The young student, Herbert Percival, so fiery in his temper, and his opponent Paul under the influence of his after-dinner wine, could scarcely be expected to understand one another or think very wisely of dropping the quarrel. Each, warmly, and after a while with little regard to words, endeavored to maintain his own position. Herbert, declaring his ability to judge of the merit of things quite as well as Paul, and the impossibility of his having been imposed upon; and Paul, recklessly exciting the student's passion more and more, by almost proving that he had paid a handsome price for a made-up article, at which the vender was probably laughing at him behind his back.

There is scarcely any thrust that touches to the quick a man of taste so keenly as an implied suspicion that he has paid a good round sum for a worthless gem, either for his cabinet or gallery. That he has been over-reached is mortifying to his self-intelligence, and that he may be the laughing stock of his friends is wounding to his self-love. So, from the little matter of Herbert Percival's bargain with a curiosity-dealer

in Rome grew a bitter controversy, which all the efforts of the young man's friends could not settle peaceably.

Gordon alone seemed indifferent to the angry words of the combatants, but he kept his bright, earnest eye upon Paul, watching every expression of his face. From time to time he would seem to try to give a humorous turn to the affair, but his manner seemed to aggravate, rather than lessen, the trouble; and the members of the party, finding that they could do no service to Percival in his present state of passion, left him to fight the battle out for himself.

Gordon remained listening, as they went step by step from sarcasm to insult, until the fatal "lie" was given by young Percival, who was now utterly beside himself with rage. At this critical moment Gordon took Paul by the arm, and with a powerful grasp led him, or rather dragged him, down stairs into their state-room, closed the door and fastened it.

Overcome with astonishment and passion, Paul turned upon Gordon to know the meaning of this authority and force. "Was he a child, to be brought down there because he happened to be the weaker physical man? Was he to appear a coward, as well as to be called a liar by that hot-brained Percival?"

Gordon quietly seated himself against the door, coolly took out a cigar which he did not light, however—only put it in his mouth as if for something better to do—and patiently waited for the storm to pass. Paul poured forth the most insulting words, and yet Gordon remained as calm as if thoroughly unconcerned at anything that might be said. And this calmness, which at first enraged his companion beyond expression,

finally had the effect to quiet him. Mortified at last the violence of the whole affair, and his invecti against the person whom he began to suspect had sa him from disgracing himself upon the deck of steamer, Paul began gradually to soften toward G don, while he cherished a bitter feeling of revei against the student Percival.

Gordon saw all this in his companion's face. knew, while he sat there watching him, that Paul v thinking of revenge. Taking the cigar from his mou he sat there caressing his moustache with that wl hand—was it to hide a smile of satisfaction?

Rising at last, he brought out from his box of win bottle with a private mark best understood by hims and pouring out for himself and Paul, spoke for the f time since the affray:

"Sit down, Hamilton, my friend. If you do justice, you will not consider yourself a caged lion a me the keeper, as it has been very like since I brou you safe away from Percival. Sit down and hav taste of good old Port with me. So, that's well, a now I will talk a little with you. You didn't mi like the power in my arm just now? But suppos that I had permitted you to do the thing which m have followed that insult; supposing I had permit you to knock that fellow down? Now, that you ar little cooler, can you imagine the disgrace of the p ture which might have been but for me displayed up the deck of this steamer, in the sight of its lady a gentlemen passengers—the picture of Paul Hamilt so respected for his intellect and refinement, play the low pugilist with the nephew of Mr. Stuyvesan Filling Paul's glass again, and waiting a moment

him to drink a part of its contents, he continued with a steady voice, although his hand trembled a little as it sought his moustache: "Now, Hamilton, an honorable duel is another affair."

Paul could drink very little without being affected by it, and there must have been something fiery signified by that private mark upon the bottle he was drinking from—for Gordon really only sipped his wine—or it would not have had such a powerful effect so soon. Paul was not half as much a drunkard in his worst estate as many who could drink a great deal more and appear a great deal better. He did not really love it then when he was drinking it; he despised his enemy, and despised himself for yielding to such an enemy; but here he was weak with remorse both in spirit and body, with Gordon to fill his glass.

All open to the shaft, it went straight home. "An honorable duel. Oh yes! that was the balm for his stinging wound. HONORABLE, and yet satisfying his revenge, washing away his slanderous opponent's word in blood."

Paul had lost that control of himself which would have led him to understand what this thought meant. He grasped Gordon's hand, praying him to forgive any ingratitude for his friendship, and poured forth his thanks for having saved him from the disgraceful scene upon the deck. "Why not grasp the chance of dying," he exclaimed bitterly, "and at the same time teach that fop that it is a dangerous thing to insult a gentleman! Yes, Gordon, I will challenge him, and he shall meet me somewhere near New York upon the very day of our landing. If he feels as I do, he will keep the secret close, so that nothing shall interrupt us. I will not kill

the fool, but will give him a mark that he shall carry to his grave."

The white hand was very busy with the moustache, and the smile of triumph was so bright that it had not altogether left his face as he replied, "That is in much better keeping with your character, my friend, than giving a blow, as you can very well see without my telling you of it; it is an honorable and true way of settling your little difficulty. We will give ourselves a few hours before the meeting for practice in pistol-shooting, for I have lost any little skill which I might have had" (here an almost imperceptible shudder ran through his frame), "and I should like some exercise myself, beside helping you by practising together. We will call it all arranged, shall we, Hamilton? If your hand is at all unsteady, I will write the challenge for you, and try in wording it to forget that I am your very indignant friend. Percival shall be courteously but very decidedly told that no true gentleman can bear the imputation of 'liar' without a desire to wipe out the falsehood with blood."

As Gordon said this with warmth he rose from his seat, and finding his traveling case took out pen, ink and paper and laid them before Paul.

"Write it yourself," said Paul, as Gordon expected he would say; "you can word it as you please. I know that it will be well done—better than I can do it as I am feeling now."

So Gordon wrote the challenge, wording it as he pleased while his companion was dozing over his glass. When it was finished Paul was in no condition to express his satisfaction if he were asked about it; and calling a servant to deliver the letter immediately and

privately into Herbert Percival's own hands, he turned back, and shutting the state-room door stood a moment looking scornfully upon the wreck before him. Then taking Paul in his strong arms, he laid him, all dressed as he was, in his own berth, only drawing off his boots, and muttering as he did so, "Oh, be his murderer, thou weak, strong, besotted *gentleman*, and I shall taste the sweetest cup that ever was offered to man's lip."

VIII.

WE will now go back to introduce to the reader one of the household of Mrs. Hamilton, named Phœbe Grey, who was left an orphan at a very early age by "an accident," so called, in which "no one was to blame," but by which a railroad train was thrown from the track, and many travelers were injured or killed. Among the latter were two poor, plain people, quite unknown, but very dear to Phœbe—they were her father and mother. Phœbe escaped almost miraculously, although she was stunned by the shock, and was carried in a state of unconsciousness into the city, where there were no friends and no money ready for her comfort or support. Her parents had been on their way to New York in search of employment, and there was not a person in the city to look after the poor orphan. She was taken to the hospital, and the evening papers were full of the painful accident, including a notice of the solitary child, which attracted the eye and heart of a benevolent lady on the watch for doing good. This lady visited the hospital, and finally took upon herself the charge of Phœbe, hoping to interest some one by her story who would be able to give her a permanent home. It was in this way that Mrs. Hamilton heard of Phœbe, and moved by her benevolent friend's account of the orphan girl, she re-

solved to take her into her family and make her useful, at the same time that she made her happy.

The tears which were in Phœbe's eyes when she came to the house dimmed their expression; but when she dried them, as she did very soon through gratitude, the eyes were found to be very bright and inquisitive eyes, large and wondering, and at the same time tender, as if she would be faithful to all love which might be proffered her. The kindness which she received from every member of the family filled the girl's desolate heart with profound gratitude; and this made her so bright and cheerful that she soon became indispensable in her way, and a great favorite with every member of the family. Mrs. Hamilton gave her, by degrees, all the light care of the house, which she had been used to take upon herself, preparing her in this way to become, under her, the housekeeper upon whom she could rely in case of sickness or absence from home.

Phœbe, from the time that Mrs. Hamilton had spoken her first kind word to her when her heart was almost breaking, had cherished for her an affection and respect which was that of a dependant and that of a child. She never could be a daughter, but she could serve her as a daughter, and she could serve all whom Mrs. Hamilton loved, as if they were her own flesh and blood. "Miss Cornelia" was the heroine of all her romances of beauty and goodness, which she secreted upon bits of paper in her own room or murmured of over her work; and "Master Paul," as she thought of him to herself, became her standard of manly excellence, after whose pattern, upon a lower plane, she hoped her husband that was to be would be made.

Cornelia always pleaded so earnestly for her in all

her mishaps or mistakes, and Paul always had a kind word for her, while he furnished her with books to instruct or amuse her.

The girl was careless, very careless, daily exercising Mrs. Hamilton's patience and self-control, and yet amusingly unconscious of anything she had done or had not done to produce this effect. The trouble was, that she was always investigating distant objects when her eyes should have been at home—hands and feet were constantly on different missions from her eyes; and thus, as they were often doing their work independently of each other, the consequences of course were disastrous to Mrs. Hamilton's valuables.

Cornelia was almost always at hand to cover the poor unfortunate with her mantle of charity, declaring to her mother, "That it wasn't a wrong curiosity in Phœbe, but a real love of knowing about things, that would end beautifully one of these days." To which Mrs. Hamilton would smilingly reply, "It will probably end in the destruction of my vases and ornaments; but we will have patience, for Phœbe's a dear, good girl after all."

Such patience was duly appreciated by the affectionate Phœbe, although she did not fully realize her connection with the causes producing this state of mind; for her heart was far from the intention of giving Mrs. Hamilton a single care. Learning from experience, however, that the consequence of keeping eyes and hands and feet upon the same straight line of duty was less disastrous than her former habit, Phœbe, by an extraordinary effort, succeeded in a few years in becoming expert and careful in all the ways of housekeeping. Even then, to be sure, her eyes never rested

upon anything new but she would thoroughly investigate its construction and use; and her mind never stumbled over a new idea but she would scrutinize the mental ground upon which she stood, to find out if the obstacle were a hindrance or a help. But, fortunately for Mrs. Hamilton, she took the right time for her investigations, and this was the satisfactory proof of her progress.

It was this very love of understanding everything that she met with that educated her so thoroughly in household affairs, so that she knew as much as her dear Mrs. Hamilton about all that was to be done to make home orderly and comfortable, at the same time retaining her girlish simplicity of mind and manner. This same habit of thought had made her an excellent scholar under the care of Mrs. Hamilton, who devoted a part of every day to her instruction. And although the questions that were asked in the midst of the recitations seemed to delay the desired progress and test the patience of the teacher, yet the eager eyes of the questioner and her cool perseverance were quite irresistible, and the result was generally quite as much to the wonder of the teacher as the satisfaction of the pupil. Phœbe thus grew up, in this atmosphere of intelligence and kindness, a well-educated, happy girl, always singing, always curious, always useful.

She had a fresh, rosy face; her figure was small and rather thin, but that made it all the lighter for her busy feet, and her dresses fitted it beautifully, which gave it a charming character of neatness and even grace. She made her own dresses as no one else could do it, and was the recipient of so many pretty "odds and ends" from Cornelia, that her coquettish taste had suf-

ficient material for a wardrobe that would not have shamed a "belle" in its effect. She was never without the distinguishing badge of this coquettish taste—a little apron, of which she had a wardrobe by itself, of all devices, daintily embroidered or trimmed, and for all occasions of work and play. She put these off and on, as ladies their morning and evening ornaments, and they added to her charms in the eyes of one named John as much as jewels would have done.

Now we have Phœbe Grey, who during the preparation for the wedding became more indispensable than ever, and who, when her dear benefactress passed away, resolved to show the undying love in her memory by the comfort she would bring to the dear ones left behind.

She now became the young housekeeper in name as well as deed, for Alice had before her the great work of educating her children to help her bring their father home, and must not have a single care beside. So Phœbe had to wipe her eyes of her blinding tears, and go to work as she had done in the first great trial of her life. Again, through gratitude, she accomplished her duty; she put herself energetically at the head of the family affairs, and succeeded in her loving determination to have all things go on as well as if the departed mother gave, through her, the blessing of a well-ordered home. The smallest duty of all those which Mrs. Hamilton had desired her to perform grew large and sacred in her eyes, and to attend thus faithfully to all made the pleasure of her life. Even her lover must not claim her time when the work left in her hands needed her attention.

A short time after the loss of her benefactress, Phœbe

had become engaged to a young officer of the police, who, on account of his ability and faithfulness was a great favorite in the department. John Morant was an excellent young man; with no uncommon regularity of features, he was still very good-looking, and his mind was keen enough to appreciate the peculiar characteristics of Phœbe's intellect. Taking the greatest delight in her habit of investigating everything she saw or heard of, John was always laughing at her for it or trying to lead her astray. He liked to excite that disappointment or wonder in her eyes which he confidentially told a friend was the greatest charm of her face. John loved Phœbe very dearly. In a higher circle, and put into verse, this love, so honest and deep would have been named "worship;" it would have been manifested in "devotion," and gifts, bouquets, caskets of jewelry and boxes at the opera. As it was, the love of John, who did not belong to the best society, was simply "affection, with an intention of marriage" (although quite as tender and true as the "worship" of the poetical upper class), his bouquets came from the market near at hand (they were quite as sweet to Phœbe as if from some famed conservatory), his offering of jewels, one little ring marked significantly, "From J. to P." (with not a diamond in it, but still reflecting rainbow colors to Phœbe's eyes), and, instead of boxes at the opera, an occasional visit to an "Old Folks' concert," which Phœbe was sure would not hurt anybody's morals, and so enjoyed with all her heart.

How happy were Phœbe and John! Quiet, cheerful lovers, who have been introduced to the reader for no purpose of excitement, who are to make no wonderful

demonstration of courage, virtue or self-sacrifice, that the reader's heart may be excited to rapture or suffer through exquisite sympathy. No. These two people are simple, good people, who form a part of the household we have been attempting to describe (for John was there every moment he could spare). They were of the greatest importance in the domestic economy, without ever becoming interesting through the experience of constantly falling into sensation dangers, to be constantly rescued by sensation good-luck. The reader may be assured that Phœbe and John will have no astonishing passages in their lives. They will be useful, and not elegant—loving, and not romantic—in daily devotion to others, without startling self-sacrifice.

Will you graciously accept the acquaintance of such commonplace people, simply agreeable from their every-day virtues and lightness of heart?

Believing that you will, Phœbe appears before you at this point of our story in her daily habit of putting Alice's children in their crib for the morning nap. It is not her duty to do this, but she has begged it as a pleasure. The babies like it, too, and spring to go to her when she appears. She has come to claim them now, and taking one upon each arm, she bids them throw farewell kisses to dear mamma, which baby feat must have been accomplished to their credit in her eyes, for she gave them each a convulsive embrace as she went out of the door, exclaiming, rapturously, "Now, wasn't that sweet and cunning!" She mounted the stairs with snatches of songs between her kisses, and with those metrical tidings of little Bo Peep losing her sheep which interest all infantile minds.

The music grew fainter and fainter to the listener

below as Phœbe went up, and the ear gradually lost her by the nursery cribs. Then imagination followed the gentle lullaby, the folding of the coverlids, the kiss upon the sleeping eyes.

The voice and the step came to the ear of the mother again, and passing the sitting-room became lost once more; but this time in—John Morant's arms.

"Will you go to the theatre with me to-night?" asked John, when Phœbe had recovered from her surprise. "Come, sit down with me here, and take your own time for considering the question, for I see in your eyes that you must consider it before I receive an answer."

As he spoke, they entered the room which had been appropriated to Phœbe's reception of her friends; but they did not sit down directly, as they were attracted to the window by the music of a street organ, which Phœbe listened to as if she had no ear for her lover's request.

Turning round, however, in a few moments, and looking inquiringly into her companion's face, she said, "Did you ask me to go to the theatre in earnest, John? Because I've been thinking lately whether it's right or not; one minister says that it is right, and another says that it isn't. What do you think about it, John?"

"And now you have come to investigate the subject of amusements? And you ask my opinion, when you have already made up your mind."

"How do you know that I have made up my mind?"

"How do I know anything, Phœbe, excepting I have studied it?"

"You have studied me, John?"

"I think I have, enough to learn that you mak up your mind about a thing, and then very meekl lead a person along to see just what you mean he sha see."

"That isn't wrong?"

"Oh no, it isn't wrong—only a very innocent wa of making it appear as if you had very few ideas, whe you are always thinking about and settling questior that other people let alone."

"But I haven't settled this question, really, John. heard Mrs. Hamilton talking the other day with th rector of the church about amusements, and I've bee trying to understand it; for Mrs. Hamilton thought was right to dance and play all sorts of games, and th minister thought amusements of this sort, and partici larly theatres, led to a great deal of harm."

As the musician had shouldered his organ for th benefit of another locality, Phœbe left the window, an John followed her to the sofa, where they sat dow together, as if the young girl desired a serious discussio of the question.

"Now, John, please tell me just for once, and truly what you think about the theatre and such things."

"Just for once, and truly—well, when a man has s little money that he has to take the price of an ente tainment out of another man's pocket, I really thin that it would be very wrong for that man to go whe he thought he might enjoy himself, for he wouldn't d it. And if a pretty girl—like you, say—should be en gaged to a promising young man—like me, say—an she might be tempted at the play to fall in love with 'prince' who would make the promising young ma

just like nobody at all, why, I should say that the susceptible young lady had better stay at home, because her happiness for life would be blasted. And if—"

"That will do, John. You never will be sober and earnest. Isn't it right to want to know about amusements, when the ministers are talking about them in their pulpits and editors in their papers?"

"Oh yes, quite right, Phœbe; in fact, everything you think is quite right. But if ministers and editors can't make out what is right and what is wrong, how is your little head to manage it?"

"I believe, John, that if women would think a little more than they do, they might some day help the ministers and editors."

"Very good, Phœbe! You can think just as much as you please; I don't object in the least. But don't let it come to 'Woman's Rights,' for I don't know anything about housekeeping, and can't be left at home while you go before the public to settle the affairs of men. I really don't know the difference between a pot and a kettle."

"A man never should!"

"Oh, I like to have you so indignant, Phœbe, at the idea of my interfering with you in the kitchen. I don't suppose you know the difference between a demagogue and a pettifogger?"

"Well—"

"A woman never should!" interrupted John, anxious to make his point before Phœbe had a chance to show any knowledge she might have upon the subject; "but you may think you know just as much as you please; don't let me deprive you of that satisfaction."

"I don't think you could," said Phœbe, laughing, and then growing quite serious as she returned to the subject which had interested her. "People seem to need amusements, and yet it seems as if they couldn't have them without taking a great deal of wrong along with them."

"I think that it is the wrong along with them that makes all the trouble."

"Yes, so do I, John. It seems to me as if God meant that children and grown people should have plays, and that He never frowns upon the play when it doesn't take the place of work; and how can grown people find the play?"

"Well, Phœbe, how can grown people find the play? This has puzzled the ministers and the editors and everybody else."

"Do you believe in angels, John?"

"Indeed I do! Don't I believe in you?"

"Of course you don't mean any harm, but please don't talk so, John."

"I won't again, Phœbe, if it troubles you. But what about the angels?"

"Mrs. Hamilton says that everybody has angels with them to keep them from evil; now, if amusements are evil, then the angels must leave the people who enjoy them, because they cannot live near wickedness. Now it doesn't seem reasonable—does it, John?—that the angels leave men, women and children the moment they enter a place of amusement, but come back to them when they go to their work again?"

"No, Phœbe, it doesn't!"

"I am sure that I have been to tea-parties, which are called very simple and innocent, where I should

think there might have been fewer angels than at plays!"

"I understand you, Phœbe; tea-parties, where there were good thick sandwiches of slander between thin slices of praise; was that it?"

"If that was original, it was very good, John," said Phœbe, laughing rather admiringly as she went on: "the great trouble seems to be, to know where the innocence leaves off and the evil begins. There are tea-parties, and croquet, and dances, and cards, and bowling, and billiards: can't they all be made innocent, and can't they all be made evil?"

"I wish, my dear, that you could make them all innocent."

"Now, if only benevolent people would take these things in hand as they do hospitals for the sick and wounded! I was thinking, John"—and here Phœbe's face was full of beautiful charity for those poor "neighbors" who sought for recreation in disreputable places—"of all the miserable boys and girls in this great city of New York, who like to play and have good times as well as the rich young girls and boys who have amusements provided for them at home."

"If you begin to think of them, my darling, you will have your benevolent little heart broken with sorrow, for it is a pitying thought for even a strong man."

"Thank you, John, my dear John!" said Phœbe, with tears just dimming her large, tender eyes at her lover's sudden emotion. She seemed to thank him for the neglected multitude who so much needed the pitying thoughts of strong men. She had never heard John put so many serious words together in all her

acquaintance with him, and, as she liked serious words, she liked him better than ever for speaking them.

"And yet we blame the poor children," Phœbe continued, with her hand lying warm and happy in John's as it had never done quite so fully before—"the poor children which you think need pity and care because they will go to places of amusement where everything is bad for them, and which lead them to being out late in the streets."

"And we blame the boys when they are young men that they go to billiard-saloons and other places, where they are tempted to drink as well as to enjoy themselves."

"Yes, John dear; of course you must know about this. Now, something I saw in the papers made me think a good deal about this subject; and it came to me all at once that the city might help these miserable boys and girls by arranging in every ward—or perhaps not in every ward—a house of amusement for them where they could have all kinds of games and billiard-tables for the boys and young men."

"Well, well!" interrupted John, "here is a plan that would startle the whole community of Christian ministers and deacons, and even make virtuous editors stare."

"I suppose it would," said Phœbe, meekly, but not at all doubtful of the result she intended; "but, John, it would only be at the very first thought of the plan; because, you see, if New York weren't full of bad places for the amusement of young people and old, of course it wouldn't be necessary to get up good places. I don't understand why the ministers and deacons need

to be shocked in leading people to places that might be made innocent, when they are all more shocked at things that they know are evil."

"I see. Go on, Phœbe."

"Instead of sitting down and being shocked at the knowledge of amusements leading to ruin, I want people to think that there may be a knowledge of amusements which would lead away from ruin."

"I think I understand now what you mean. You want the city to be a great affectionate old father, keeping his children from running to bad places by providing them with innocent amusements under his own benevolent eye!"

"Yes, that is just what I mean, dear John; you've said it a great deal better than I could have said it, and you don't laugh at me at all, as I thought you might!"

"All I can say, Phœbe, is this, that if the city authorities had half the benevolence of my dear little sweetheart, who is only twenty-two years old, they would adopt your plan, and not only do good, but put into the treasury every year. As it is, I can't see what more can be done about it, excepting to speak to the chief of police, who is a good friend of mine, and will be interested for your sake. But it takes a mighty lever to move the city government, my dear.* At any rate, I am more and more convinced that my Phœbe is a treasure—only in one serious, melancholy thing I am quite dissatisfied!"

* There was no lever mighty enough to move the city government, and so Phœbe's benevolent plan fell to the ground. Are there no wise men in power who will look into the subject as preventive of evil?

"Why, John, how sober you look; tell me what it is, for you really frighten me." And Phœbe looked with genuine alarm into her lover's face.

"You will never tell me when we are going to be married! You are thinking and thinking, and trying to understand everything and settle everything but that."

Phœbe's expression changed suddenly at this unexpected change of subject, and she would have risen from her seat for some wellnigh forgotten duty if the lover had not by accident entangled his arm between her waist and the chair. In her dilemma she thought of introducing the subject of the weather, or any other topic of the like simplicity and convenience; but John's eye had an expression that Phœbe thought would not bear such putting off, so she gave up the design.

There was an emphasis in John's words that couldn't be mistaken when he spoke again: "Phœbe, tell me, when are you going to marry me?"

There was no escape for the young housekeeper from a question which, no matter how startlingly proposed, is a pleasing one generally to the feminine ear; so Phœbe became quite composed and earnest as she said very softly, with both her hands in John's, "When Mr. Paul comes home."

John looked grave and withdrew the arm that encircled Phœbe's waist, as if grieved or offended beyond all bearing. But when the tears came into the young girl's eyes, and her voice trembled as she spoke, John's arm stole back again.

"I know I seem unkind, dear John, but I have been taken care of by them all my life! They have taught

me all I know—they took me home when I had no one in the wide, wide world to love or care for me; and how can I go away and leave Mrs. Hamilton with everything to do, when her heart is so full of other work?"

"Now, don't cry, Phœbe—anything but that! I think that you are a very grateful, good girl, but it's rather cruel to put me off so long as Mr. Hamilton's absence promises to be." And then, seeing that she was really distressed, he changed his tone, and with the old banter in his manner, asked suddenly, "How many eggs do you put into a pudding, dear?"

Phœbe knew that John had forgiven her, and looking up gratefully and smilingly, said, "I know that you are teasing me, but it takes a good many eggs to make a pudding light."

"Yes, I thought so! and it takes a good many hopes —how many do you think?—to make my heart light, that has been waiting so long for the hand of the housekeeper."

"Now, dear John," replied Phœbe, nestling closer to his side, and looking up affectionately into his face, "I am so sorry that you are not happy, just as we are now! I am sure that I love you very much, but I can't leave Mrs. Hamilton, even if I do love you. I should think it would seem so plain to you!"

"Now I am going to put a conundrum to you: if a devoted young public officer waits twenty-five years for a dear girl with glossy hair and lovely eyes, what relation will that young man be to a bridegroom with gray hair and rheumatism?"

"That isn't a good conundrum at all, John," said Phœbe, laughing; but serious again as she added,

"Please wait a little while, and say nothing about it — that's a dear, good John, for indeed I can't leave Mrs. Hamilton yet!"

"I promise not to say anything about it for a week. But I tell you, Phœbe, you must be married to me within a year, or I shall—wait another. I was going to say something about getting somebody else, but I couldn't make myself so wretched."

"I'm glad you couldn't," said Phœbe, with a blush at confessing her satisfaction. "Why, you know that we are just as happy as we can be, and Mrs. Hamilton says that she loves to hear your ring every night; it comes so regularly, and your step is so familiar and quick."

"And so I am to keep ringing at Mrs. Hamilton's side door every evening, for all my days, because she likes it so much?"

"No, no, John; but *I* like to have you come so much, of course, and I believe we are just as delighted to meet each other as husbands and wives are. Did you ever think that people don't seem to be as happy after they get married as they expected to be? They seem to have so many troubles and cares. Then what is the use of being anxious about anything when we are so contented with each other, and happy?"

"I am very sure that they are more happy who have a house of their own, with a dear, busy housekeeper. And then to think, if we were married, how I should escape going out to make love on rainy or cold nights, after having been on duty at head-quarters all day! But bless me! my time is up. After all that you have told me about putting me off as a husband, you won't refuse to go with me to-night? Of course you won't.

So put on your prettiest things, Phœbe, for I am very proud of you, as I have every reason to be."

John went down town a little heavy-hearted; but Phœbe was soon singing about her work as if released of a pressing fear that he might urge his suit and carry her away.

IX.

CORNELIA'S journal two years after he
riage:

December 16, 18—: "I have been thinking it
come, and it is here! The first sign that the l
lost in the husband. After all, I cannot complain
I have enjoyed a two years' honeymoon. My l
been happier than that of most women who h
pended upon the promises of the bridal morning
the day is not far spent with me yet. It is on
Robert told me this morning, that 'it would be
venient at present to come all the way up to
lunch.' I have always thought that it must be
venient, but as he said he couldn't stay away fr
all day, I was well pleased enough to have him
even when our friends smiled wisely at his devot
if to prophesy that it wouldn't last. I was s
with the present, and did not care to anticipate t
for the morrow.

"The inconvenience of coming all the way u
to lunch does not trouble me, now that the morr
come; only I remember that scarcely two yea
my bridegroom said to me very tenderly, 'Wh
other husbands may do, I shall always come h
lunch with you. How can a man be contented
the whole day surrounded by black coats and bu

when he can so easily make his noon an hour of peace in an earthly paradise?'

"Of course this is to be understood as pretty strong language, but I couldn't help admiring the poetry of it when Robert's eyes confirmed its sincerity from his affection. There was more reason and less poetry in the remark of my husband this morning, and his eyes have a corresponding expression which is very good, but not of the honeymoon character.

"O Robert, now my 'husband,' in common with the race, you can banish yourself so contentedly from that 'paradise' up town, where I preside at lunch, and pay a restaurant your fee for the loss! Well, perhaps business has changed; perhaps it is increasing, or needs more attention because it is falling off. To be sure it is an old-established house, which Robert has told me stands upon a firm foundation, and cannot be easily moved by the chances of trade; but still something may have fallen that they had purchased in large quantities, or something may have risen of which they had laid in no stock, and all this has made them uncommonly anxious and busy!

"Of course, BUSINESS must be in some way connected with this change in Robert's noon-day plan—his affections and thoughts still flow in their up town current, no doubt. Yes. I will remember the half-regretful way in which he kissed me for all day, and not trouble myself about the morrow, as before.

"How singular it is, to be sure, to be notified in this simple manner that the honeymoon is passing away; that my magnetic influence is weakened so much that Robert's feet can walk all day through the Wall street crowd without being disturbed by my polar attraction!

"After this, it may follow in the order of matrimonial passiveness, that I shall come to the putting on of my own shawl, shall dance without the eye of my husband resting upon my 'grace and beauty,' and shall even look a little pale without exciting his alarm!

"I can be merry and laugh over it now; but if great changes come, can I be patient and good? Very likely they may come, and Alice will help me, I know, for she says the lover deepens into the husband, and becomes a truer, if not so demonstrative a companion. Alice's religion seems to teach her almost everything in this world as well as the next; and she is such a faithful student of spiritual things that she learns something new every day, as scholars on a lower plane make it their aim. She is always trying to have me true to the heavenly nature within me, nourishing it with the 'daily bread,' which is angels' food, and is always ready for us when we seek it.

"I have never forgotten what she told me when my dear mother passed away—'that the spiritual world and the natural world are connected like the soul and body—that they make one so truly that the soul cannot be far off from its body, as it has been always believed that heaven is far off from earth. And that it is the same with the soul and body of man—the one is connected with heaven and the other with earth when there is no evil to break the heavenly bond. That death affects the body only—the spiritual man within knows nothing of death, but with his natural garment thrown off for ever, stands consciously before the angels, who were before this his soul's companions, but made invisible by the material garment which was like a veil between them.'

"'Our mother may be near us now, although invisible; she stands in her own world upon solid, but not material ground, which no evil spirit can undermine; and above her head are the beauties of the clouds and sunlight, as with us upon the earth. But with this difference between the heavenly and the earthly—that her world is of substance, enduring for ever, because of the Lord's eternal quality, and earth is of matter perishable in itself, and only imperishable just so far as it receives the spirit of life from the eternal world.' So Alice wrote to me when I was sad at home in missing mother so much. And now I am comforted with the loving belief that she is with me in angelic face and form, although invisible to my natural eyes.

"How patiently Alice is waiting for news of our dear Paul! John Morant has employed an able detective, who has sent photographs to all the places in which Paul might be likely to hide himself, but without success; so Alice keeps her heart from being utterly despairing only by the knowledge of his existence, which comes to her through remittances to her uncle for her benefit, accomplished with most ingenious secresy. Paul must either be insane most of the time from his evil habit, or he must be the victim of a delusion which is thoroughly blinding him to his happiness and duty. If we could only find him, I know that we could help him. John is determined now to set the detective at work in Brooklyn and New York city, although both Alice and myself think that the time and work would be lost, as he would not come to our very doors to hide himself. But John thinks now that this may be the cunning of his hiding-place, and he means —with his usual interest and energy in our service—

to search every street and house, until there's no hope left.

"If Paul could only see those beautiful children of his, it seems as if he might be loosened from any bonds of evil that might be holding him back from home. It appears to my loving eyes that they are charming enough to draw any one away from wrong. It was a fortunate conceit of Alice to name them 'May' and 'Rose,' for although they are so exactly alike that one could hardly be distinguished from the other, yet their beauty is as different as the rosy breaking of day and the soft sunset. Dear Alice! The children came to her when her heart was full of coldness and death, and she welcomed them as her May-Rose, to bring the gladness and beauty of earth to her perception again.

"It seems as if their mother's first state of joy, and the sunset of her hope had been pictured in her children; for the eye of Rose is full of baby joy and morning freshness, while May's dear face is softened to thoughtfulness, as if her short day of life had already brought something of evening to her young spirit. They are wonderful in their intelligence and development of character; and well they may be, for Alice has no other care nor thought than their cultivation, for the sake of one day charming their father and winning his whole heart, so that there will be no room for evil.

"But what a long journal I have written to-day! The entries since my marriage have generally been brief—such as—'Very pleasant to-day—going to take a drive—Robert will be home soon—have no time to write.' Now that Robert's business is detaining him down town, I shall probably have more leisure, so that I can

te myself to a better and more full expression of houghts.

What a long day it has been! I am sure that rt will come in to-night, embrace me tenderly his long absence, and say I am looking a little than when we parted; for it seems as if he have taken a little journey since I saw him last!"

X.

WHEN Paul and Gordon left the steamer in it dock at New York, they drove as rapidly a possible to an out-of-the-way hotel, where they ordere a private parlor, and took possession of it for the tim that would elapse before the meeting with Herber Percival. Paul's face was haggard and wan, as if h had passed through a year of troubled thought; an throwing his coat upon a chair, he walked to the fire place, where he could look out upon the busy stree without being seen, and stood leaning against it fo support—a picture of weakness from all the melan choly memories crowding into his mind. But Gordor threw himself negligently upon a couch—the picture of ease, and indifference to sorrow and trouble, which made a powerful contrast between the two.

Gordon glanced from time to time toward his companion, and curled his moustache over the secret expression of his mouth, apparently watching for some sign that would be the key to the nature of the feeling overcoming Paul; but for a long time no sign or word was given.

Gordon was fully aware that this was no time to be humorous or give advice. He knew that deep emotions were painfully at work in his companion's bosom, and although he longed to counteract any softening

influence by his apparent sympathy, he was wise enough to keep silent.

Paul seemed to feel, at last, his friend's desire to break the silence, which had continued on his part ever since they left the deck of the steamer; and he suddenly exclaimed, "New York again! HOME! Oh how well do I remember the day I left, with friends bidding me a happy voyage—and how have I come back? Is it not all a horrible dream? O God! why can I not awake and find that Alice is yet to be won, is never to be lost? It cannot be, for I am broad awake to all my misery. Disguised in name, and lost in character, I have only to wait in some secret place for death to end my wretchedness."

Gordon quietly arose, lighted a cigar, and, handing one to his friend, coolly offered his own as a match, and Paul, mechanically accepting the kindness, was gently led to the seat lately occupied by his companion.

Gordon then leaned against the mantel, and thus with their positions reversed, which seemed to please Gordon mightily under the cold white hand at his moustache, he spoke persuasively and gently, as a brother strong in the understanding of the world's ways might speak to a brother younger and inexperienced, who was permitting his feelings to cloud his judgment.

"Despair again, my dear Hamilton? It will weaken every organ of your body and every faculty of your mind. You know, my dear fellow, that you will soon need the manly exercise of each to enable you to show the world that you are not lost and degraded—that you are to be the knight-errant of honor—the champion

of the fair name of gentleman, which has been defamed by the title of 'liar.'"

Paul answered in feverish haste, "Gordon, I will not meet young Percival! Can I add the weight of a duel to the burden which already weighs upon my memory?"

Gordon paled a little—it might have been with anger—at the vacillation of his friend, and then replied: "Gentlemen do not generally wipe out with forgetfulness the stain of dishonor. If you choose to end the affair by forgetting your engagement, do so; but I shall not forget—I shall take your place."

Paul knew, from the determined tone, that Gordon would be true to his word. Touched by this friendly care of his interests, as he understood it, he left his seat, and taking Gordon by the hand, pressed it as if it were a kind, good hand, ready to do him service; and said: "You shall not take my place. I will meet young Percival at the time and place appointed, if you think there is no escape; but I would have no harm done to the hot-blooded, yet, I believe, well-meaning, boy. All that I saw of him after our misunderstanding was gentlemanly and proper. It was a hasty, foolish engagement we made, and in my sober senses I have no heart to keep it."

Gordon's eye shot out a glance of passion that might have astonished Paul if his eyes had not been directed at that moment to the street, with the yearning curiosity of one who longs and yet dreads to see some familiar face.

With Paul's attention still directed from him, Gordon replied: "I thank you that you have understood my friendship; and I am glad that your blood is so

cool in thinking of that shameful exposé on board of the steamer; it was rather hot when I parted you from that 'well-meaning boy!'"

Why did that tone bring up the whole of that scene, and all the bitterness of insult that had been slumbering as if it were dead? Paul's blood was heated suddenly as if the student stood there full of passion, and Gordon were wisely forcing him away from doing violence!

Turning upon his friend, Paul exclaimed, "I will wound that boy for his insolence, but I will not kill him. Order some lunch, and then we will go and practise as you proposed, if you know of some pistol-gallery near; I will not go far and run a chance of being seen."

Gordon's eye beamed with satisfaction now, and ringing the bell, he ordered a lunch which included wine, and then sat down with Paul, determined to be patient with any mood, now that his end was gained.

"If I have troubled you, and seemed ungrateful for all your kindness, Gordon," said Paul, after a moment's pause, "you will forgive me. I will never forget that lonely hour in London, when I awoke and found you watching at my pillow. You must have patience with my humor—with my appearances of forgetfulness of all I owe you for your care of me during that sick and miserable week."

How could Gordon resist the generous light of those eyes and meditate further wrong to that poor soul? How could he listen without sympathy to the noble struggle for moral life which Paul began to make, dreaming pleasant dreams of peace and even joy

once more, with his blood becoming cool again, and his thoughts taking more heavenly forms?

"After this meeting, which shall be for the sake of honor and not for the sake of harm, to show that I will be true to my engagement without a purpose to take life, I will retire to some quiet place, and fight in solitude with my besetting sin. When I am entitled to the name of conqueror—when I can fully trust myself, which it may take years to decide—I will then seek Alice again, and win her love, as I did at first. Gaining this, even at the last hour of my life, I shall depart in peace, with a hope that I may be found worthy to live with her and the little ones in heaven."

"How did you know of the birth of your children, Hamilton?" inquired Gordon.

"I bribed one of the waiters at the house to secresy, and sent him into old Mr. Talbot's neighborhood the very day we left, so that I could have the latest account of Alice's health, which I trembled to think about after the shock of my letter. He brought me word, direct from Alice's servant, whose sympathies he had enlisted by an apparent faintness, which gave him access to the house. He remained long enough to ascertain all that I desired, and returned to me with the news of my twin-children's birth, but with nothing of my darling's heart, with its secret grief!"

"It was a happy thing for you to know that all was safely over."

"I was grateful for Alice's sake, yet I must go without seeing my children. If you, Gordon, had not been near to help me fly, I should have even then gone back to have a look of their sweet faces—to see if the eyes of their mother, those beautiful, tender, pure eyes

of their mother, looked at me through theirs, in the old innocent confidence and love."

"Your wife is looking into those very eyes for your own expression of excellence and intelligence, you may rest assured! You remember my argument when you thought of going back for one last interview with Mrs. Hamilton—an argument which I drew from Dickens' poor idiot boy Barnaby; it is certainly well that there was no danger of stamping the sin of your face upon the unborn features of your child."

"There may be a question of that possibility, but I could not run the risk, as you wisely advised. Now I am so far grateful and happy that they and their mother live in their English home surrounded by every comfort, which may be increased to luxuries by the remittances I shall send. Yet how can this be done without discovery?"

"Leave that to me, my friend."

And it was left to him—with what success Cornelia's journal has told.

The lunch had been brought in, and Gordon hoped that the thread of Paul's discourse upon his future reformation might be broken by this, and the digression about his children; but Paul was so much in earnest that, as they sat down to the table after the servant had left, he commenced again:

"I am filled with serious and firm resolutions, which you must honor me for; and I believe through them I shall be saved! I feel at this moment as I think a drowning man might feel, who sees a life-boat coming to rescue himself from death and those he loved from sorrow. I was afraid I should kill my mother; but her death-bed shall yet be a happy one, through the joy of

my repentance, for she shall in some way know of my strength of will to resist the devil who besieges me. She shall one day see in her son's face that he has not utterly put to shame the humanity that she transmitted to him through her maternal pains. She shall yet be glad that she has suffered for me, watched over me, been patient with me—oh best and dearest of mothers! She shall not die with that sharp tooth at her heart, the memory of an ungrateful child. God be praised that the prodigal may some day return!"

In his own emotion Paul had not noticed the paling and flushing of Gordon's face, the terror in his eye, and his firmly-set teeth. The strong-willed man mastered himself in a few moments, and answered as a sympathizing light-hearted friend:

"Paul, my dear fellow, you are quite a wonderful compound of the woman and the man! Fire and honey seem to be the elements of your character—now so red-hot, and now so sweet. Be one thing or the other, Hamilton, or you are nothing. On the eve of an exciting action, I would be all fire and strength; no more of the honey for the man who goes to meet an adversary in the flesh."

The words grated harshly upon Paul's softened heart. His poetic temperament felt the touch of Gordon's sarcasm as a sensitive plant feels the touch of a mortal hand; and he shrunk within himself, suddenly folding up the leaves of his tender and fresh resolves—the old desponding look came back as he replied:

"It was like a woman, you say, to be softened as I was almost to tears by the thought of my dear mother, and all that I would do for her? Perhaps it was, and

I have no right to be likened to a woman, with all her pure and holy thoughts. You have scattered my dreamy fancies. It seemed as if the lullabies and counsels of my mother's dear voice had come like purifying waters into my memory, and had washed out suddenly all the guilty stains there; that Alice's smile had pierced the darkness of my soul like a flood of light. You did well to call me back from such a heaven. I am not worthy of enjoying it."

"You are quite worthy of it, now that you are a man again," said Gordon, warmly; and over the light glass of wine Gordon watched that Paul did not take too much for the pistol practice. He entertained his companion with his inimitable talk about the passers-by in the street, of which his position commanded a view, and gradually led Paul's mind away from his own affairs and troubles.

It might seem strange that Paul could be so easily led, when he possessed such natural strength and goodness of character; but an over-sensitiveness of guilt was conjoined to the effect of wonderful art practised by that wily enemy who was constantly by his side. The result could hardly be surprising.

Paul had become just enough excited over his wine to accede, with something like alacrity, to the proposition to adjourn to the shooting-gallery. His brain was active, but his hand was not unsteady; and entering into the exercise without seeming to consider the end intended, he became so engrossed with his success, and Gordon's admiration of it that they lingered in the gallery until the time appointed for the meeting. A bottle of champagne ordered at this critical moment counteracted, through his companion's foresight, the

cooling effect of the open air upon Paul. The influence of the wine was sufficient to keep up the spirits of Paul, as they drove to the ferry with the pistols they had purchased, and which were hidden close from the prying eyes of city guardians, who might desire to stop such "honorable" dealings among men.

Upon landing unmolested at Williamsburg, the two friends took their way to an unfrequented spot, which Gordon had recommended when the duel was arranged, thereby showing a former familiarity with the lonely locality.

Young Percival arrived with his second about the same time, and greeted Paul with quiet and gentlemanly courtesy. He was pale, but was resolute and manly in his appearance, as if there were no cowardice in his paleness. Paul looked at him in dreamy wonder, if this man for whom he felt only a little anger were a real enemy whom he had come deliberately to wound?

But there was no one to step between the foolish young men. The good old uncle, Mr. Stuyvesant, was sitting quietly in his family circle, with the peace of a heart at rest upon his countenance, now that he enjoyed again the comforts of home. All friends and foes were busy in looking after what their own hands found to do, without any realization of the scene across the ferry.

Why was not the laugh of the child hushed—the smile of the young girl turned to a look of terror—the hand of the wine-drinker, the billiard-player, the merchant, the money-changer, paralyzed—the drawing-room merriment clouded—the tea-table chat silenced, when just across the water two immortal beings were

standing face to face, with pistols in their hands? When from this spot a soul might go out suddenly from its earthly tabernacle of flesh and blood to seek a place to dwell in—a country whose boundaries it had never studied—a home for everlasting life, where no treasures had been laid up!

How could the hum of New York go on, and the quiet of the country continue, with the danger of such a result so imminent! The city's hum did not stop, and the beautiful field uttered no voice.

Twilight was just spreading over the scene—a fitter time than morning for such a meeting. Darkness would follow the deed, and night would come harmoniously to cover the head that, with a bloody crown of success, might turn back for the ferry and the city. Gordon seemed to have arranged everything for secresy, and there seemed to be no escape from his powerful influence.

The ground was measured, Gordon's eye shone with feverish brilliancy as he busied himself with all the preliminary points, although he consulted with Percival's second in the coolest manner, as if it were a simple matter of business, to be attended to with proper care.

He spoke a word or two with Paul from time to time, bidding him be ready and cool, so as to aim as near as possible to a vital part, without "killing the fellow;" for he dared not have Paul think of a fatal result, for then all would have been lost—he would not fire at all! This aiming at a vital part without producing death was a dangerous trial of skill for a man who had made his hand somewhat unsteady by champagne, and yet could firmly hold the deadly thing put

into it; but Gordon had thought of that—did it answer his purpose that it should be so?

Gordon's was the only stirring, busy figure of the group.

There were no signs of cowardice in the faces of the others, neither were they statues moved at Gordon's will. But the influence of the twilight sky, the peaceful country and inward thought made them noiseless as they moved and quiet in their words.

All the murderous emotions, the desire for "satisfaction," had passed away from the challenger and the challenged as they stood upon the duelling-ground, with the peaceful influence all around them, excepting the unsuspected warfare in Gordon's heart.

This hush of approaching evening was not like the awakening of day, when the very renewing of nature's life excites the pulse to work. Gordon mistook his time. He had good hearts to deal with, although they were often heated by passion. Paul was sobered, for the effect of the wine had passed away with the delay and quiet—Gordon again miscalculated. So while he spoke with Paul from time to time, as we have said before, the latter was with better counselors.

Percival was so manly that Paul could feel no contempt for him; yet his thoughts seemed to be absent, perhaps in the city across the water, taking a last farewell of some one dearer than a sister. And so it was. Young Percival could not forget a dear, sweet face that was even now blushing at every footstep upon the stair. He knew that she was expecting him, after a brief morning call, which made her anxious for the evening, she scarcely knew why; perhaps it was that her affection had made her eager for the story of his travels and

his love. He could not forget those beautiful eyes which had expressed so much gladness at his return—the lips that had been so very sweet after his long fasting—the soft, white hands that had nestled so confidingly in his, all these were defined so sharply in his memory; and he might never enjoy them again! He was outwardly calm and brave, but at heart he was growing faint, thinking of Lillian.

Oh for some hand to break the bond of deadly ceremony that Gordon was fastening around the two young men, and let loose the cramped and struggling angels of the heavens within. Seemingly there was no visible or invisible hand to help them. But it was not so; for a good spirit in Paul's own bosom was strong enough to conquer. It snapped apart the cords of Gordon's weaving as if they had been a thread. "I will never do it, so help me God!"

Then Paul, throwing his pistol far into the grass, sprang forward, and clasping Percival by the hand, exclaimed:

"Percival, we will not be fools a moment longer, to stand here with pistols in our hands, when I believe there is no deadly purposes in our hearts! Your face has not a shade of passion over it; as I stood watching you, I saw a tenderness in your absent eyes that convinced me you did not love this present business any more than I."

"Love it!" interrupted Percival, eagerly; "I hate it!"

"So I thought; and now I take back my challenge, and even the taunting words which made you forget yourself on board of the steamer. I am no coward, but I dare not brave the thoughts which have been

stirring within me since we have been standing here. If you feel as I do, Percival, you will be far happier in shaking hands over a manly reconciliation, than you could possibly be in the satisfaction of powder and ball."

"Happier, a thousand, thousand times happier, my really brave friend!" exclaimed the relieved antagonist, also throwing his weapon down, as he pressed Paul's hand in both of his own. "You are a noble fellow, and I ask your pardon, from the very depths of my heart, for ever having called you anything but a true and honorable man, as you have proved yourself to be. I would not have flinched, any more than you would have, a single hair's breadth from my position, after we had been set up as targets for each other's skill. But now I feel a coward's joy that I shall escape from harm to give HER happiness—my Lillian, who is waiting for me now."

"You have a Lillian!" Paul exclaimed, with bitter meaning, "and your life is precious to her! I am glad for her and you that it is so—I am glad that we have not been such fools as to peril your present joy and my future"—here he hesitated a moment, and then went on abruptly: "Percival, the antagonists are gone, and here we wipe out in friendship, and not in blood, the stain which we falsely called dishonor. No words can bring dishonor to the soul which is determined to stand passionless before the momentary wrong of another. We did not understand this. We were both excited and both mistaken; shall we be friends?"

"Sworn friends for ever! I don't know what evil spirit made us enemies, for I could not help admiring and respecting you through all the voyage to New

York, although I would not escape this meeting! Oh how light my conscience is, and my heart bounds with new life, as if the hand of death had been taken from it! I feel almost wild with joy over those hated pistols lying there upon the ground, where they belong—the reptiles that they are! Their hissing, venomous mouths have uttered no sound to disturb the quiet about us, but I will break the silence, and make even the echoes of nature rejoice with me, by shouting 'sworn friends for ever!' "

The quiet atmosphere seemed startled at the sound, and even Percival appeared somewhat astonished at the effect of this boyish exuberance of spirit, for, lowering his voice, as if in deference to a more serious mood, he said to Paul, "Lillian will bless you for this. The sweetest face in the whole world will always soften at your name. I will tell her all my fault and all your nobleness, and together we will pray for you as we have never prayed before! My life was worth but little to any one but her: because you have saved HER from sorrow, I am very, very grateful."

All this time Gordon stood apart, with his white hands motionless, and his whole face glowing with passion.

XI.

THE detective found no trace of Paul in Brooklyn or New York, for he was at that time far off at sea, voyaging from place to place in search of health.

He had seen the news of his mother's death in one of the city papers, and the shock had such a cruel effect upon him that he would not eat and could not sleep until Gordon aroused him to the wickedness of thus throwing away his life.

Gordon would even turn saint to accomplish his end. He had no desire to have Paul die, and he now brought into play all the philosophical religion of which his intelligence was master, striving to win Paul back to health. He became an able physician to body and mind, but it was terrible to hear Paul's self-reproaches, which were perhaps more bitter than even when he left his wife.

His mother! His precious mother! Gone, before he could tell her all that he had resolved to do to bring back her peace—gone, without a smile or a word of forgiveness for all that he had done to break her heart! He should never press her hand again. She had gone down to the grave, and there was no one to take her place! What desolation to be motherless!—but oh what bitter desolation to be made motherless by his own wretched hand! There could be no sorrow or

sin like this! There was a hope, as far off yet as heaven, but still a hope, that he might win a home with Alice and his children; but never, oh never again, would his dear mother's face light up the household hearth. Whatever might be his happiness on earth, that sanctifying joy was lost—his mother's presence. And he had not only lost her here, but there. "There?" What was this "there," and where was it?

Desponding at her grave, he had no eyes to see the risen spirit. Blindly he wandered in thought over the mazy distance, which had no form or coloring, in which the dead dwelt.

Gordon tried to help him by repeating all the doctrines which had been taught him of "the resurrection and the life;" but he found no comfort in them—all was darkness and death.

The joys of heaven were mythical to Paul, because they were undefined. His mother was an angel now, but how was she an angel? Was she in the form of that tender, motherly affection which had made her life on earth, and which had bound him to her—oh he knew now with what strong cords—or was she an angel only in an ethereal something, which would be substantiated in form at the last great day?

He had lost his mother in this maze of doctrine, and so while Cornelia and Alice followed the new angel to rejoice with her in her more real home and more perfect form, Paul gazed across a boundless river, seeking painfully for even an outline of the other shore, where his mother might stand disembodied, but radiant perhaps like a distant star.

O happy faith! opening the eyes of Cornelia and

Alice to see that, if God created the heavens and the earth, the foundations of the one must be as well defined and firm as the foundations of the other; how much more so, when we consider the eternal substance of the one and the destructible matter of the other! And to see that if God could make the myriads of golden harps with hands to play upon them, He would not leave His great wide dwelling-place desolate of all other heavenly forms. He would not leave the everlasting heavens more barren than the world beneath His feet, which He has made so full of beauty and forms of use!

The departed mother was in a spiritual world—how much more PERFECT than the world she had left! It "is a gain" to die!

Tortured by his self-upbraidings, and weakened by his sense of loss, through which there was no seeming gain in heaven or on the earth, poor Paul was deadly sick and did not care to live! The love of his mother had been very near the love for his wife, and now that she was gone from his sight for ever, he could not rally from his depression to work for the home that she would never bless. But Gordon, never weary or discouraged, took him in his strong arms as if he had been a child, placed him in a carriage, and before he fully realized his friend's design, Paul found himself on board a ship, which cleared that day for the Indian seas. Planning everything and executing everything, Gordon had arranged all Paul's business matters with his consent; and withdrawing all money from scattered investments in the city, he had judiciously reinvested where the fund could be available without fear of watchful friends.

Thus, with every clue broken which might lead to the withdrawal of Paul from his power, Gordon, with another profession of devotion and care, made himself the nurse of Paul for a long, long voyage—the invalid seeking health and recovery if possible from the sickness of his soul, and the self-sacrificing companion seeking a new field for his own designs.

And so, long before the detectives were started on their new beat in New York city, Paul lay in the cabin of the ship "Good Fortune," with Gordon reading to him in a voice almost as soft and winning as a woman's.

Years passed before Paul grew well and strong—years full of untold dangers to his soul and disappointments to his enemy close at hand, like that of the dueling-ground. There was in Paul's higher nature sufficient spiritual ground for an angel's feet to stand upon; and from this guardian within there came escapes from snares and plots which made the foe without more determined from vindictive passion, and more cunning from repeated failure. Gordon had almost convinced himself that heaven and hell were struggling for the spiritual life of Paul. And notwithstanding his evil purpose, he could not help declaring to himself that Paul was worthy of heaven's guardianship. He never lost that noble and yet tender spirit which Gordon had sarcastically called "fire and honey." Still addicted to his intemperate habits, he did not fall so low but that he was still a gentleman in intelligence and manners when it was in accordance with Gordon's secret will that he should be himself.

Still blinded by the false appearances of his friend, Paul generously overlooked any momentary flash of

spirit, or only gave a passing thought to any strange expression which might have been a clue to his real character. Really great and noble himself, and suffering now from his detestation of vice, he never could have dreamed of such depravity as that of which he was the victim. The private history of his friend remained unspoken, for Gordon had only once alluded to it, as too painful for his recital and too much bound up in the lives of others for a betrayal of confidence; and this was enough for Paul's delicate respect for the affairs of others. After this hint the confidence was all on the side of Paul, and Gordon used it after his own fashion.

They sailed and traveled during these years in all parts of the Eastern World. In the mines of Australia they came in contact with rough and busy humanity, and here Paul escaped one of the snares laid for his feet—another use of weapons which, from Paul's superior skill, nearly ended in the death of a poor gold-digger, who became aggrieved at some usurpation of his claim, and dared to assert his right. Gordon and Paul invested money here, and had honestly interfered with the "occupation" of "Small Bill," as he was called, for his weakness of body and mind, and there was but a narrow escape from bloody work upon the disputed ground. But it was only Paul's business to do the deed, with the fire of drink in every vein! He took upon himself "the settlement of this thing," and Gordon was nothing loth. But the poor wretch, "Small Bill," ran away from danger, leaving his claim to the rich American, whose powerful weapon scared away his bravery, and as he went he dragged away the net into which Paul's feet would have fallen.

Again and again this same thing happened on board ship, in China and Japan, there were strange fatalities and unexpected releases, until Paul grew to laugh with Gordon upon the "fire and honey" which seemed constantly at work in his destiny as well as in his character. He seemed to bear a charmed life of deliverance from his own excesses; and in his serious moods, of which he had very few in this constant change of scene, he thought that perhaps his mother was watching over him, as she had done ever since he was an infant on her breast—perhaps the motherly habit of her soul could not be put off with death? He so unconsciously cherished this thought that he learned to feel no surprise when scenes of danger were passed through without expected consequences. He even grew more reckless of danger—to enjoy, as it were, the more earnest care put forth for his deliverance; and it was then that this daring spirit became Gordon's fear. Paul jeopardized his life so often, with such mad confidence, that Gordon awoke to the necessity of putting a stop to it, or his own work would be taken out of his hands by some fatal act. He was really not protected more than others, but he was very open to good influences from within, while he was exposed to the tempter from without. Gordon accordingly proposed returning to America, now that Paul had recovered his strength; and, yearning after something like home, the wanderer gladly consented.

With a considerable increase of fortune from their gold speculations, and a greater gain in knowledge of people and places, Paul and Gordon set sail for the shores of the United States, and after a five years' absence again landed in New York, bronzed with travel,

and Paul, at least, eager for rest after his rovin life.

But there was no rest with Gordon by. The pani of 18— caused such distress among the lower clas that significant murmurs went abroad of indignatio and want that might soon break out into dangerou expression. Gordon painted, with his usual vivaciou coloring, the terrible necessities of the poor, and thei unjust treatment by the aristocratic classes, until Paul' generous nature answered to the summons for hel and with his acquired recklessness he rushed into th battle. Fortified by wine, Gordon induced him t attend a meeting composed of rash and headstron men, who intended the violent mending of their sha tered fortunes. Through the glass which he had ju drained these men looked to Paul of a nobler orde His mind was so innocent of cold-blooded sophistr that these were patriots and heroes about him, going t battle in legislative halls for their rights—not th ignorant and selfish demagogues which Gordon's u emotional character rightly appreciated.

No man in the meeting so little believed in its di order and foolishness as Paul Hamilton, whose nam was now James Stewart. As usual, he was too muc blinded by his own high view of things to realize th ignorance of the speakers, and too much under th influence of wine to see how much bombast there w in the patriotism, and how much selfishness in th heroism.

Men were really trying to excite bad passions, an they seemed to him as enkindling the manly sentimen they tried to incite the daring to deeds of violence, an he thought, with his judgment put to sleep in h

excitement, that they only intended to teach an eloquent lesson of the people's power to those who were high in office, and were lining their own coffers with unlawful gains.

Afterward, in the quiet of his own room, with Gordon's encouraging glance withdrawn, Paul began to doubt if he had really been among intellectual and pure-minded men—if there had not been a glamour cast over imprudent sentiments by the wine which he had drunk. But with the morrow came Gordon, and again a mask was put upon the evil toward which he was being led. He became better and better known at the meetings—was led to speak—was considered a tower of strength to the party he had joined, and finally found himself one of the prominent leaders of the society, with a revolver in his pocket to guard against accident!

That night he was led home in triumph by Gordon, kindly strengthened in his new principle of action for the good of the unprotected, and sent to bed, at last, with the glowing purpose of performing his work with a faithfulness worthy of the cause. That same devoted friend was the first one admitted to his chamber the following morning, and the question came rather forcibly to Paul's mind, "Had Gordon been in bed at all that night?" His eye had been upon him the last thing the evening before, and now the first thing as he woke: he had scarcely felt its absence in sleep.

In a perfectly sober condition, Paul would not have accepted a prominent position in this matter; and now, half-aroused to the recklessness of the last night's proceedings, he declaimed against the advantage that might have been taken of his condition. "You knew

that I had been drinking, Gordon; why did you permit me to go in this irresponsible state to the meeting?"

"Because, my dear friend, you are just as sensible when you have been drinking as most men are when they are sober. You spoke splendidly! You glorified the cause with your brilliant enthusiasm and carried everybody along with you to such a pitch of admiration, that it was a unanimous desire that you should become the chief leader of the party—but this I would not allow you to be burdened with, if I had any voice. I guarded you from this election with my influence, because I feared you might accept it in your abandonment, and regret it this morning. So I did the best I could for you, at the same time respecting their necessity of showing you the high esteem in which they held your talents."

Always on the watch to do him a service! What a strong friendship he must have excited in the bosom of this wonderful man, Dudley Gordon, whose physical and mental natures were of the strongest as well as most elegant proportions—a man so agreeable and fascinating to all, and yet devoted to him as a loving brother! Paul could find no fault with a man who guarded him so faithfully against even his own enthusiasm, so another question was put at rest.

"And now, James Stewart, you will give them all the influence of your talent as well as the power of your strong right arm."

"My strong right arm! They do not think of violence? If they do, I am none of them! The laws of the land are too sacred for me to aid in breaking them by force. I will do all I can for this oppressed party—

by writing or by speaking I will serve them faithfully; but my right arm they cannot have, if they intend any deed which would disgrace them."

"You are right to be so careful, Stewart; wise men like you are always careful. I feel a greater confidence in the success of the cause, because you are not so rash as usual. What a mayor you would make! No peculations, no unjust decisions, no party vetoes. Seriously, I rejoice as for my brothers, that this poor oppressed class will be led so cautiously and wisely to its true position. That you will ask so boldly, and yet in such a lawful way, if they who have to deal out political good things have any hearts, have any sympathy for distress in their bosoms."

Dudley Gordon talking seriously of hearts and sympathy! With no belief in hearts, excepting that they formed an important part in the physical anatomy of man, and with no definition of "sympathy," excepting as it related to that between the plots in his own soul and the eager hand that carried them out, he cared far more to see Paul's revolver in his hand, and he in the midst of a turbulent crowd, full of bold, and even murderous intentions, than for the dearest "rights" of man!

Making his life a study of time and opportunity to influence his companion toward a certain point, fixed in his mind by an evil spirit of revenge, Gordon always cunningly plied Paul with wine at the right moment for his purpose, and cared not a jot for the men who were working themselves up to frenzy over imaginary wrongs.

He knew that they could not, in their most eloquent moments, tell exactly what they wanted, because they

had no definite idea of what they needed. The principal claim was for BREAD, but Gordon knew th BREAD and WINE—the necessary and the delightful- alone would satisfy them. The bread that was deni the hard-working poor and the luxurious wine whi sparkled above the heads of the virtuous crowd.

Many a quiet, industrious citizen suffered in patien all the anxiety for the maintenance of a depende family, hoping on through the darkest clouds ar struggling manfully against want. There were ange in those households, with spiritual power to bear the up. Oh, blessed are the patient, trusting poor! Th are far more likely to have the bread and wine sent their door than to receive it by going out fiercely- demand it as their right from more successful brother

The day at last came when the leader of the factic had determined upon a desperate plan, which he ha not yet revealed: it was nothing less than an attac upon the city banks. He understood the elements h held in check, and knew the moment which woul bring the ripened passions to the consummation h desired. Gordon was in the leader's confidence, an he promised to prepare his subordinate, Paul, for son new move, which, under the influence of that wir with the private mark, Paul might be led to follow.

But the very day before the one appointed, a serva came to Paul's door to say that his friend was take suddenly and seriously ill. He hastened to Gordon bedside and found him ill indeed. What cruel disea was that which bound the active man down to his na row bed? What stopped his speech against his iro will? What kept at his side, with an unyielding powe the white right hand, which had been so faithful t

cover any satisfaction he had desired to hide? It was a paralytic stroke, affecting all of the right side of the body from head to foot. He could not talk, he could not move, and yet his consciousness remained sufficiently active to be aware of all this, while he could not at first fully understand his condition. He was really a poor, helpless, pitiful object—and watched over by Paul! He had no power now to send him, by false reasoning, into a desperate mob; and when Paul was sought for, he answered the deputation with the words, "My suffering friend was faithful to me when I needed care, and nothing shall tempt me from my duty to him now. He needs the most careful nursing, and he shall have it. I will not leave him until he recovers. If the cause which you advocate is a good one, it will succeed without me. I am not the Providence which can direct it or bring it success."

Paul was firm in this decision, and the visitors left somewhat disheartened by this loss of a single-minded and active worker in their cause. But Paul did not give a thought to anything but this present duty of returning some of the obligations he owed to his sick friend. He knew nothing, and did not seek to know, now that he was left to his own good sense, of the violent movements and final breaking up of the party, which, under the excitement of mistaken zeal, might have led him, step by step, even to murderous deeds.

While Paul thus shut out the world and all the dangers of it in his care of his friend, Gordon, when he had revived somewhat, lay there cursing in his evil heart the chance that left Paul free and strong before him, while he was helpless! The hand of death half

over him—his power gone to carry out this last, almost executed plot—how suddenly and completely had he been baffled! The body, indulged to excess, became like a spoiled child, the ungrateful instrument of pain sharper than a serpent's tooth.

Doubly wretched sufferer! Sick men have generally some solace when struck down by even so terrible a disease as this; but Gordon had not one ray of sunshine for his sick chamber. His body was prostrated, and his soul hated that man who was moving about his room. There could not have been a greater retribution for all Gordon's designs upon Paul Hamilton than this.

His sick bed, which might have restored his conscience to health, if he had permitted it to do so, was, on account of his rebellion, a place of torture. He inwardly raged with disappointed malice and compelled inactivity. His eyes alone could talk to that faithful and hated nurse, and he had to guard their expression carefully, now that there was no right hand to help him.

Days and nights he had to bear this discipline—taking drink from the hand in which he had hoped to see a deadly weapon—moved tenderly in his bed by the arm which he had hoped would, before this, have been raised to perform a far less Christian deed. He who had governed Paul was now as a child before him! Yes! he who had governed Paul, and would govern him again, if the hand of death would only be taken from his side, and that strange heaviness from his brain.

All kindness and patience made Gordon hate Paul the more. And now that Paul denied himself all

stimulants, so as to be faithful in his work, an expression came into his face which was the worst of signs to the powerless man—an expression which came from those good counselors with every man, who are whispering at the willing ear. But Gordon felt that he was getting better, and when he should be well, how long would he allow Paul's face to bear that look?

Determined to carry out his designs, he made haste to get well; and in this haste grew careless. Against all protestations of Paul, he determined, after some weeks' sickness, to go out and take a drive, when it had been forbidden by the physician, whom Gordon considered a fool for his precaution; and the consequence was, that he was confined to his bed again with more distressing symptoms, and, the physician thought, with the prospects of a lingering death.

Paul now began to show signs of exhaustion from his devoted attention and sympathy. Dr. Grant told him to see to himself, or he might be soon as badly off as his friend, and therefore of no further use to him. He hinted to him that Gordon might need the services of a faithful friend for some time to come; and Paul felt conscious, from his own miserable feeling, that he had better be governed by this advice, if he wished to save himself for such a use as the physician had hinted at. He obtained an excellent nurse for the invalid; and, thoroughly glad to be relieved, he sought his own room, hoping to find in its quiet and the care of himself a return of his old vigor.

No sooner had he closed his door than he was summoned to open it again, by a loud knock which he could not ignore, much as he was inclined to rest and solitude. It was an earnest, if not an imperative

knock, and he opened the door to admit a person who had of late, upon several occasions, appeared anxious for his further acquaintance.

Paul had been pleased with the man's shrewd remarks and practical knowledge of the world, although he had never invited him to the intimacy of his room. But now he entered with somewhat of a deferential, yet determined manner, as if his purpose was good, and must meet with no opposition. And he said with a strong, firm voice, which made Paul feel weaker than before, "You are not well, Mr. Stewart. As you passed me just now, I saw that you were ready to drop. I know very well that you have been using yourself up in Mr. Gordon's service, and it is very likely that you are going to have a fit of sickness that may last as long as his. Now I like you, Mr. Stewart, and I mean to look after you, because I don't think you are able to look after yourself. You see, you have set an example of taking care of folks, and I'm a-going to follow it."

"Will you take a chair?" asked Paul, feebly, wishing for an opportunity to sit down himself, which his visitor saw, and so accepted the politeness, while Paul threw himself into an easy-chair, and leaned his weary head upon his hand.

"You must acknowledge," continued the visitor, a little nervously, perhaps, if Paul had been strong enough to be suspicious, "that this is a poor place for comfort when a man's sick—you've known that, by the other case up stairs; Mr. Gordon was troubled every night by the people coming in late and passing up and down the stairs. In fact, I've ordered a carriage to

take you to a quiet place, not far from here. I'll go with you myself, and I know you'll not be tired. It's the house of a good woman, a friend of mine, who will be like a sister to you, and is a first-rate nurse."

Paul said, "I am much obliged, but I really do not think it would be necessary."

"I think it is," replied the new friend, firmly, "and excuse me, but I am in a hurry, for the carriage will be at the door in half an hour. Let me pick up your things and strap your trunks: you needn't move to do a thing; just tell me what to do."

Paul's head grew dizzy and faint as the man was talking; he very well knew that some kind of sickness was stealing upon him, that would oblige him to take to his bed, and then who would be there to watch over him and care for him? After all, was it not a happy thing that this Will Somers, a little rough though he might be, was there, with a strong hand and a willing heart? And he should so like quiet! It was, after all, a pleasant vision for a sick man—"a sister, and first-rate nurse."

Will Somers seemed to read his thoughts, for he gently started upon his business of packing up, and understanding by Paul's silence that he was either too feeble to make objections, or he had yielded to the necessity of the case, the man went on, guided by Paul's eye, and a word or two at times, until the trunks were packed.

The porter announced a carriage for Mr. Stewart, and, carefully led down stairs, Paul was helped, in an almost fainting condition, to his seat, and after a short drive found himself at the quiet house of this man's friend, in the sweet, home-bed of Mrs. Mo-

rant, the mother of John. In the hands of friend last.

All that night the fever raged, and delirium s within a week. Then came the loving wife who been watching so long for the time when she c help him!

XII.

THE summer home of the Hamilton family was within thirty miles of New York, upon the line of railroad running north; and it was all that could be desired, on account of its comforts and fine situation. The house stood on rising ground, commanding a view of an undulating country, so that from the window of Alice's room she could look down upon the apple trees of the orchard, and across their tops to a little lake in the distance, which appeared like a mirror, in whose clearness the birds might adjust their plumage as they sailed across the sky. The view embraced all the variety of foliage which makes a landscape lovely and full of character; and, summer after summer, in all the years of Paul's absence abroad, Alice looked upon these wonderful works of God, and believed that He was good.

The beautiful young wife was now pale and thin from her long waiting for a place by her husband's side; but she was lovely even now, in her white dress, worn whenever the weather permitted because Paul had always desired it, and with the fashion of her hair unchanged, because Paul had admired it.

She still patiently worked and prayed, although she had been disheartened many and many a time, when the flesh would be so weak, so very weak, in longing

for her husband's presence. But her faith was still a living faith, nourished by the declaration of the Holy Word, that the mercy of the Lord is enduring for ever, and by the mother's death-bed prophecy that Paul would yet come home.

Beside this food for her hope, she had a constant reminder of Paul's existence in the remittances sent to her through her uncle in England, which were like a promise to her of her husband's continual remembrance until his return, but which they had never been able to trace to their source, through Gordon's constant change of agency. Alice did not need this money, for a legacy of Mrs. Hamilton's had left her independent; but she valued it beyond all price, as a token from the absent one of his life and memory.

The children had grown up strong and beautiful in the pure country air, and Cornelia being with them every summer, they had her little boys, Robbie and Paul, for their companions. The playmates helped each other to learn what was strong and tender. The boys were younger, but such hearty boys in health and spirits that they would have asserted their boyish sovereignty over the gentle girls, if they had not been subdued by the strategy which had been inculcated by Alice, of simply leaving the boys when they enforced their rude authority.

Thus they grew together in helping each other, for the girls gained courage and strength from the boyish character of their companions; and the boys learned to imitate the gentleness of the girls, which had the effect to soften their natural ideas of authority to incipient gallantry.

May and Rose were developing into the good and

lovely little beings who might some day become their father's help and pride. Alice's teaching and care had been well repaid when she saw in their intelligence and characters a promise of womanly excellence, and was glad that their faces and manner would gratify Paul's eye. Yet they were children still, in all the graces of their artless age.

It can be imagined how Phœbe idolized them. And Cornelia, who loved her own children as a mother must love her own, cherished an affection for Paul's little girls only second to this. They were considered with her own in every gift and pleasure.

And now, we come down in our story to one bright, clear morning, when Alice awoke with a dream so fresh in her mind that the effect was wonderful upon her spirits. She was elevated above her earthly care and trouble into an atmosphere of heaven. She had seen in her dream a group of children, all in white, with sunshine resting upon them like flame, and in their midst PAUL, radiant with joy, while he decked the children's heads with garlands of flowers. As each child received its gift, she ran and plucked a flower, with sprays of "living green," and when all were crowned, they made a wreath from their own offerings, and gently inclining Paul to sit at their feet, they placed the crown upon his head, with the very poetry of love and joy in all their motions. The crown became golden in the sunlight, and Alice awoke with a sense of happiness which she had never experienced before. Afterward, in descending to the breakfast-room, she almost expected to see there some further sign, to confirm her in her spiritual belief that Heaven had visited her with some great hope.

But there was no sign beyond the usual order and comfort of the place; and, hearing the children's voices discussing their pony's breakfast of apples, with which they were always eager to amuse themselves before they were called in to their own morning meal, Alice stepped out of the window, upon a little elevation which commanded a view of the stable yard.

For a few moments she enjoyed the sight of the boys and Rose in their eagerness to take their turn in feeding, while the useful little May gathered the apples from under the trees. Then Alice began to fear a surfeit for the favorite animal, and to think that she must ring for the nurses to bring the children in, when her attention was attracted to a noise behind her, and as she turned she saw that John Morant stood within the breakfast-room, looking out upon her with an expression which she could not define, as being made up of pleasure or pain.

To see him there was sufficient to show her that something had occurred, for he must have come up from New York that morning in haste. Her dream at once came freshly to her mind: was there soon to be a crown of flowers for Paul woven by the children's hands? But she did not stop to consider even her own thoughts; stepping eagerly through the window again, she stood confronting John, whose message came to his lips at once at her look of inquiry.

"Mrs. Hamilton, we have traced him at last—" It was enough to frighten all John's words away as a deadly paleness spread over Alice's face, and she made a painful struggle for self-restraint.

John hastened for a glass of water, and as he returned to her with it, Alice was able to take it and

thank him. She seated herself at the window, where the air might still further relieve her, and John continued, at her request:

"Mr. Hamilton was traced to a hotel in a retired part of New York by a detective, whose business it was to attend the meetings of a people's party, which the authorities feared might end in mischief. Will Somers, which is the detective's name, recognized Mr. Hamilton by the photograph which I had given to him years ago, when we were searching Brooklyn and New York; but not being 'quite sure of his man,' as he said, he took a room at the same hotel, and in a few days ascertained, to his satisfaction, that Mr. James Stewart was the Mr. Paul Hamilton I was anxious to trace.

"When he was quite sure he came to me; and with this information he also gave me the impression that his care of a friend and intimate companion named Dudley Gordon, who is now desperately sick and laid up for a long time—" Here John's language began to fail of being as elegant as he had tried to make it, through a weakness of the heart in approaching Paul's own serious illness. "This fellow, Will says, is quite a fine-looking—"

"And my husband?" interrupted Alice; "you know something more of him that you do not like to tell me?"

"Well, yes," John answered, hesitatingly; "the fact is, my dear Mrs. Hamilton, that your husband has had a good deal too much care of his sick friend, who must be a strong-headed fellow, for he has had a dangerous relapse from obstinacy in doing as he pleased, and now may never get well."

"Is my husband ill?" demanded Alice, with an evident purpose of knowing at once anything that might be kept back from her. "I wish you to tell me, John, if my husband is ill, and where?"

John saw that she was strong enough now to bear all that he had to say, so he replied as frankly as she wished: "Mr. Hamilton is very ill at my mother's house. I have only been waiting to tell you this until you could go to him without causing you both a painful excitement, and do an injury to Mr. Hamilton in his weak state; you can go now without danger, for he is delirious from his fever."

Rising, with wonderful composure Alice simply answered, "We will go at once," and left the room.

Phœbe came in soon after, and the lovers met in a more serious mood than they had ever met before, as if this were no time for light words or love-making. Phœbe had been sent to order the carriage to take Mrs. Hamilton and John to the station, and to request the latter to have some breakfast before they left.

When Phœbe delivered Mrs. Hamilton's message to her lover, John stoutly declared that he would not eat a morsel unless Mrs. Hamilton would wait for the next train down, and have some tea and toast for herself, if nothing more.

"Please do, John," said Phœbe, earnestly, "for Mrs. Hamilton seemed so anxious to have you eat something; and really, I don't believe she could eat any breakfast if she tried."

"Then I can't, Phœbe, that's all. And I really don't know but a mouthful would choke me; if you had seen Mrs. Hamilton's white face just now, you couldn't

think of sitting down deliberately to eat a breakfast, unless it was to make her eat one, too."

"Mrs. Benedict and myself have been trying ever since she went up stairs to have her take just a little before she goes; but she only quietly says that she has no appetite, and must not lose the train. She is putting up her things, just as if she meant to be Mr. Hamilton's nurse; but in all her hurry she thought that you must need some breakfast after your early journey."

"I am very much obliged to Mrs. Hamilton; but, as I have said before, I don't eat a mouthful unless she does. Take a cup of tea and some toast up to her room, Phœbe, and if she sits down to eat her breakfast because she knows that it is right, and wants me to do the same, come back and let me know. She MUST prepare herself for the journey and the meeting with her husband."

"Of course, I know she must," said Phœbe, with her tender eyes full of tears, "but she doesn't seem to care for herself when we tell her so."

"Very well; go back, and say to her what I have told you, for I mean just what I say."

Phœbe reported to Alice, John's state of mind, and being convinced that he was right, Alice denied herself the luxury of putting out of her thoughts everything disconnected with her husband, and patiently took what was offered to her; and John, being made acquainted with her decision, partook of a more substantial meal, although commenced without an appetite, so anxious was he about the coming trial to Mrs. Hamilton.

And now, for the first time in their lives, Alice would leave the children in other hands. She had

never been absent from them more than a day, and she was about to leave them, for she knew not how long.

"I will promise," said Phœbe, with a comforting voice, which Alice could not resist, "to take just such care as you would of Rose and May. I will never leave them out of my sight. Please, dear Mrs. Hamilton, believe this, and don't trouble yourself about them at all; and do, oh, Mrs. Hamilton, do take good care of yourself."

Tears came, for the first time since the arrival of John, into Alice's eyes; and as she pressed Phœbe's hand gratefully, she said, "Dear Phœbe, I trust you entirely. As for myself, I will remember what you ask for so affectionately."

Cornelia had been entirely overcome by the news of her brother, and Robert was endeavoring to quiet her in her own chamber, so that Alice now sent a message to her, begging her to have faith and hope, and to explain to the children the real cause of her absence from them.

Alice had not trusted herself for anything more than a farewell kiss; and the merry voices of the little ones came from the breakfast-room like a cheering good-bye as she took her seat in the carriage.

After all the apparent delay they reached the station in time for the early train they had desired; and at the hour when the gay world was just awakening to the morning of its fashionable day, Alice and John entered New York, and took a carriage for the neighborhood of the Battery.

When they alighted at Mrs. Morant's door, Alice was weak and faint; but, supported by John's arm, she walked up the steps and was ushered into a cheerful

little sitting-room, where the sunshine seemed to welcome her as the same good friend which is said to cheer all places, high or low.

As John gently led her to a couch, upon which she seated herself, with every limb trembling, the reality of her situation came upon her with all its momentous consequences. Under the same roof with her husband once more! In some room of this small house he was lying now, so unconscious of her coming: one single wall alone might divide her from that beloved being whose voice she had not heard for seven long years. Oh how she longed to hear that voice, although it might not have a word of love for her! "My husband! My husband!" her heart was crying. "Oh lead me to him!"

John had considerately left her for a few moments, and as she hastily arose from her seat, as if to seek some one who would show her to her husband's side, he re-entered the room. Alice eagerly advanced toward him, and laying her hand upon his arm, asked, in a tone of touching anxiety, "Oh, John, may I see my husband now?"

"My mother has just sent me for you," replied John, with his face expressive of the deepest sympathy; "she wanted me to show you to your bed-room, where you can put off your things, and after that, if you are composed enough, I am to bring you to Mr. Hamilton's room, where mother is waiting to give up her place to you."

John then led the way up stairs, and showing Alice her room, retired. Alice entered, shut and locked the door, and falling upon her knees at the very threshhold, she prayed, with the pleading of a child for some coveted gift, "O Father, give me strength!" Then,

somewhat quieted by her faith that this petition would be heard and answered, she repeated in a less impulsive manner the prayer which most conjoins the Father and the child—the Lord's own prayer, so perfect in its adaptation to every want.

She arose from her knees with her face lighted up by this communion with the Giver of all peace; and when John knocked at her door, she was ready and composed.

Descending the stairs (so she had passed her husband's door as she went up!), John gently opened the door of the room adjoining the one she had occupied upon her arrival, and passing in, brought his mother to Alice. The silence of deep emotion fell upon the three as they stood at the entrance of that sick chamber. Alice could only press the hand of Mrs. Morant, and lay it upon her heart, as if no language could express the value of its work at her husband's pillow, and she would draw it to her bosom as something made very dear to her by contact with Paul. John and his mother understood all that she was unable to express, and they waited a moment to give her time to prepare herself for the next step to her husband's bedside; and then Mrs. Morant said in a low voice, "I think Mr. Hamilton has been sleeping, he has been so quiet for the last half hour—shall we leave you now?"

"I thank you, yes," replied Alice, in a still lower voice, with the current of life through her heart and lungs seemingly checked an instant by the thought of what she had yearned for so long—the sight of her husband's face; and hearing the door shut behind her, she knew that she was now alone with Paul—that in

the little bed half shrouded by the darkness of the room, lay the being whom she had only known as the lover of her youth. She approached him now, not only with the old affection, but with that deeper and higher love, springing from a relationship in which they had never met—the relationship of parents—in which they had anticipated the sweetest joy.

He could not help it now, that she should see the impression upon his face, that he had fled from her to hide—that noble and manly face in her memory was, after all his martyrdom, in danger of being effaced by the image of self-indulgence and disease lying there before her eyes!

As if disturbed by this, Paul tossed and moaned upon his bed; and thus it was that Alice met her husband after their long parting!

Alice knelt beside the bed, and taking the hand of Paul in hers, kissed it, and bathed it in her tears, which were flowing fast, as the wandering eye glanced from her and upon her with no recognition of love. Some faint words dropped from his lips, but they were like a language she had never learned; they told her nothing that she could understand, or hope to understand. For a moment she was startled into the belief that Paul was growing calm in a consciousness of her presence, for he suddenly withdrew his hand from hers, and played with the ringlets of her hair as he had done so many times before; but only for a moment, for the hand as suddenly struck out, as if to ward off an enemy, and she sprang from her knees at the heart-breaking appeal he made to be delivered from danger.

Alice was ready to despair at this sudden reaction of her hope, when the door was opened, and their own

family physician, Dr. Morris, entered. Oh, the comfort of seeing the familiar face and of hearing the cheerful greeting of the good old man!

"Well, my dear Mrs. Hamilton, so you are nurse?" he said, as he went forward and offered his hand. "It is warm weather, my dear, and I believe my eyes are weak, riding in the sun." This, for an excuse, to hide the emotion in his face. Then going to the table, he laid off his glove, took considerable time to smooth back his hair, and walked to the window and back without appearing to notice the struggle which Alice was making to speak.

"Dr. Morris," she at last said, "this is very, very sad for me."

"Yes, my dear, no doubt; but then the blessing of taking care of those we love—you must think of that, you know! And how does our patient seem to-day? I am very fond of Paul, and always was. I was with his mother when he was born, and have always called him one of my boys. I believe he is a good young man—only led away. Don't be alarmed about his sickness, for I will get him up again if any man can."

He brought a chair for Alice, and taking one for himself by her side, he felt the patient's pulse.

"Do you think him worse, or dangerous?" asked Alice, in as quiet a voice as she could command. "I never saw a case of the kind, and it seems to me very serious."

"Serious? Oh no. Well, yes; he will require pretty careful nursing, my dear. Wasn't he a splendid fellow! As I said before, there is very little doubt—but that in your hands and mine"—it was a painful

effort to smile, but the good doctor did it—"he will recover."

"You are quite sure that you think he will recover?" Alice eagerly asked.

"Quite sure that I think so," replied Dr. Morris, with his thoughts bent upon the case, in consultation about the suitable medicines and the chances of their success, while he was trying to talk with Alice.

"But no excitement, my dear; be careful that he does not see you when he comes out of this delirious state—it may last some time—for it is a pretty bad case," he murmured in an undertone, forgetting, in his professional anxiety, the loving wife at his side.

"Is it so bad?" she exclaimed, bringing him back at once to the duties of comforter, which he performed with kindness and tact.

"I have told you that he will require pretty careful nursing, my dear, and I have told you that I will bring him up if any one can; for he has a good constitution, and I have the medicine that will help it in the struggle for health. There will be a battle, of course, my dear; perhaps a lingering one and a painful one, but you know that strong hearts at the bedside do a good deal to bring the victory!"

Alice saw at once that this was a wise philosophy, and that the doctor meant that she should be the strong heart at the bedside, to help in the battle for life.

"I thank you, doctor," she answered, as if he had spoken words of advice; and he saw by her new look that she was already growing strong for her work.

"And now, my dear," said he, rising, "give very close attention to all my directions about the medicine

which I shall leave, for there is nothing too small to considered in this case. And at the same time careful of yourself."

Alice gave very little heed to the last remark, l bent every faculty of her mind upon the minutiæ of l duty until the doctor should call again. Particu instruction was given about the watches at night, Alice must be looked after as well as the patient, l Morris knew, and he therefore divided the time for administration of the medicine and her watching that she should have the regular nursing according her purpose, and at the same time have some hours rest during the night.

At last, when all the directions were given, and medicine prepared from the well-worn case, the doc shook the hand of Alice, and, kissing her cheek, s with unexpected tenderness, "My daughter, keep your heart, for God will surely reward its devotion that dear young man."

"I WILL keep it up, dear Dr. Morris," Alice swered, firmly, "and I thank you for the comf which your very presence has brought to me."

"Remember his mother's dying words when y feel troubled, 'Paul will come home,'" were the d tor's last words.

As he went down the steps to his carriage he brush away a "foolish tear," of which, as a physician, might have felt ashamed, they are so mailed agai such things by habit, but which, as a fatherly admi of that young wife, he must have known did honor his tender heart.

John came in soon after the departure of Dr. Mori and found Alice comparatively bright and cal

busying herself with the arrangement of her husband's pillow, as if she were happy to begin her work at once.

"Have you any commands for me?" asked John, "for I must leave you now, as the rules of the department require that I should be at the office in half an hour."

"I will not detain you now, John," Alice replied, in a cheerful voice, "to explain the doctor's regulations for your help, which he insisted upon for my benefit. We will talk that over to-night. You know how much I thank you in my heart for all that you have done for me already; let me see your mother as soon as possible, that I may thank her too, and become better acquainted with Paul's good friend."

"As to all that I have done for you, Mrs. Hamilton, that is nothing worth speaking of, when I remember all that has been done for Phœbe. I only wish that it had been ten times as much; but I mean to continue my watching at night, which will relieve you for some good hours of sleep. But I must be gone. Good-bye, Mrs. Hamilton; mother will help you whenever you need her, and that bell-rope connects with the kitchen, so that you can call the girl whenever you want anything."

When John went out, he sent his mother in to Alice, and the latter was gratified to find in Mrs. Morant a plain-spoken, sensible woman, who promised to be of great assistance to her in the present and in the future. Her face was strongly expressive of good-nature and gentleness, without weakness of character, and her whole person, although built in no very graceful mould, was scrupulously neat and clean in appearance,

as if she were a lady in all her habits, even if she ha no lady's maid to arrange her hair and lay out he dresses.

"Mrs. Morant," said Alice to her, as she appeare with a little vase of fresh flowers, "I can never than you enough for all this kindness to my husband an myself. We have all known how good and obligin John is, and now we are happy to know, in the ver beginning of our acquaintance, that his mother is a worthy as he of our gratitude and esteem."

"John is a good boy," replied Mrs. Morant, partl from motherly pride, and partly from the desire t direct Mrs. Hamilton's praises from herself: "he ha never given me a moment's trouble, and that is a goo deal for a mother to say about a boy, and an onl child."

"It is, indeed. I wish every mother of a boy o girl could say what you have said, and be so happy i saying it, as you must be. We are very glad fo Phœbe, and for ourselves, that John is one of ou family, for we consider him as such."

Better than any eloquence, better than a thousan thanks, was this to gain Mrs. Morant's heart! Fron that moment of truthful testimony to the virtues o "her boy," as she still persisted in motherly tenderne to call him, although a man according to the laws o the land, she was bound hand and foot, with all thei services, to the family interests. Alice had made friend who would help her with tact and faithfulnes in her work of bringing Paul back to life and home.

"And now, I suppose I must give up my place a nurse, but not altogether, I hope," said John's mother as Alice stood over Paul, fondly smoothing his hair;

"he is very quiet, generally, although sometimes he talks a great deal about his troubles."

"Has he ever mentioned me?" asked Alice, anxiously.

"Oh yes, indeed! And you mustn't be affected if he seems distressed about you, as he has. You must make yourself as comfortable and happy as you can, and always call upon Susan and myself for any help."

"I certainly will—and thank you. For I am sure it would give you pleasure to have me do so."

"And now, I have some errands to do, which I couldn't get a chance to go out for while I nursed Mr. Hamilton alone. I shall be back in a little while, and Susan understands everything that it is necessary to do, for she has helped me a great deal since your husband came."

"You must not be anxious about me, Mrs. Morant, for really I shall get along very nicely. The doctor told me all about my duties, and if our patient remains quiet, there will be no difficulty in performing them; do not hurry, then, for it will do you good to go out and take a long exercise in the fresh air."

"Well, good-bye; I shall not stay a minute longer than I am obliged to; you may depend upon that, for I shall feel afraid that something may happen—you are not as strong as I am, you know."

"Perhaps I am stronger than you think," replied Alice, with a beautiful smile, in which Mrs. Morant might have read a trust that to her own weakness there would be added a help which would be all-sufficient for her need.

"If you are not strong, you are sweet enough for a picture," thought John's mother as she left the room;

"all I wonder is, that Mr. Hamilton could be such a fool as to run away from such a wife!"

If Mrs. Morant could have looked into Dudley Gordon's heart, she would have had her wonder satisfied, for she would have seen such a cunning web of evil woven there that the victim could have hardly escaped from it by his own power.

Paul, although burning with fever, and restless, was not violent in his delirium. And, as Alice sat by his bedside fanning him and bathing his head, she lived over and over again the short married life they had enjoyed together, the happy wedding journey, and the quiet weeks in England after their return.

Sometimes her tears could not be kept back when she saw the traces of suffering in Paul's face. All her natural affection for her misguided and unconscious husband cried out, "Why should we both be left to this great sorrow?"

But from this state of tears and complaint she would rise to the spiritual mind, and with her eyes of faith would see the bow of promise, whose colors were from the Divine Sun, shining alike upon the good and upon the evil. From this mountain she would come down refreshed, and say to the affections and thoughts which peopled the valley of her natural mind,

"Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever."

Even with her husband lying there, with a great distance between them yet, she must never forget that "the Lord is good." Through this trust and humility there was commenced a new Sabbath-day's journey toward the land of milk and honey; and Alice found peace as she watched that day.

XIII.

EXTRACTS from Cornelia's journal, from two years after her marriage until the present date of our story:

"*June* 20, 18—: My baby is asleep near my heart; my left arm encircles him, while with my right hand I put down, in rather uncertain characters, to be sure, a few motherly ideas respecting his charms. Robert Hamilton Benedict—the best of names for the most beautiful of babies! My wee bit of a baby can hardly realize its high-sounding title, and, in fact, has no idea of anything beyond the sweet mouthful of its own little thumb; but Alice and I enjoy it, as if it were much more able than it is to hold up its head and be wise.

"I say, 'Alice, now don't you think that my baby has beautiful eyes?'

"And Alice says, 'Oh yes, VERY beautiful eyes,' as if she had never said it before.

"Then I remark, perhaps for the twentieth time, 'It seems to me, dear Alice, that his mouth is peculiarly sweet.' And then the dear, sympathetic Alice replies, with a tone as if the words were just then coined from the mint of her true heart,

"'His mouth is just like a rosebud—there could be nothing more lovely.'

"But when I said to her one day that if I had seen

that darling of mine in the arms of a stranger, in any part of the world, I should certainly have been impressed by his remarkable loveliness, she could not refrain from laughing, and I joined her with all my heart when I thought of my soberly uttered folly. I had pretended to be so very impartial, when I was overflowing with a mother's pride; but everybody must forgive it, because this is my first baby.

"Robert is only demonstrative at times, now; sometimes he becomes a little enthusiastic over the mother and child, but, without being the least jealous, I see that he is more anxious about the baby than about me. Little Robbie! If you and I are to be rivals, we have some work before us, for I am not willing to give up my sovereignty without a struggle to be as sweet and charming as you!

"You haven't much mind as yet, baby, so there is where I have the advantage; but alas! for me; the winning smile will come soon, and the first step, and the infant language, which can never be resisted, and then where will be your father's heart? Not at MY feet, I am sure!

"I suppose that I am very wrong—of course I am—ever to hint to myself that Robert is more indifferent to me since the baby came. Still, it can't be expected that I should be perfectly resigned to the loss of those peculiarly sweet sentences which were Robert's gift every evening before I became his wife, even if I comfort myself with believing that they are now spoken to himself in the very depths of his heart. I should dearly like to know, sometimes, what he says of me in the secret places of his affection; for, after all, no matter how sure one may be of her husband's love, a

word or two about it, now and then, does not come amiss.

"I am really trying to be reasonable and good about it, and I never let dear Robert know that I am longing for the old affectionate times. But here, in my private journal, I can be as naughty as I please, and relieve my mind by saying that it does not seem a pleasant way at all that the men of the earth have generally, this of keeping all their admiration of their wives locked up in their own bosoms, when they overwhelmed their lady-loves with adorations and protestations in the first stages before matrimony.

"I had a delicate little ring upon my right hand when I was first engaged to Robert, and I really had to put it away and never wear it, because a whole evening's pressure of it into my next finger was more than I could bear. I wear it now, for there is no danger from Robert's pressure of my hand.

"I know that Alice sees that I am just the least bit disappointed in my expectations of married life, for she brought the conversation round the other day to this subject, and told me, that when Robert and I get truly acquainted with each other, and learn to overcome our peculiarities for each other's sake, the old devotion would come out in the life, and that I should be told in actions what I used to be told in words: 'I could not live without you.'

"Of course I know that we cannot have the same views of things when we have been educated by different mothers, and have been under the influence of different friends.

"I am unreasonable to suppose that Robert is going to make love to me always as he used to do, or is

always to have no mind of his own, because he is bound to think just as I do. I shouldn't be proud of such a husband, and I don't think he would like it in me, if I should go to him for my ideas.

"Alice sums everything up by telling me that I must try to DEVELOP everything good that is in Robert's character and my own, without expecting to change the quality of the souls at once. She says that his good affections and thoughts are entirely different from mine, and that the more perfect each is in the work of development, the more perfect will be the union of the two. I will try to remember this, and act upon it.

"But here are the baby's eyes wide open upon me, and they are such wonderful eyes that I am glad I had just put down such a sentiment as he awoke. I am not ashamed to look into those innocent eyes, as I say now, like a little child, 'Robbie, we will be good.'

"*Sept.* 30, 18—: The baby has been troublesome the last month, and last night, in particular, I was kept awake when my eyes were heavy in sleep. Babies are beautiful, but there are times when we would be grateful to put them away comfortably in their cribs and turn over for a good long nap. We can dwell with delight upon their charms all day, but even the most doting mother protests against the little bright eyes shining like stars at night, and the 'piping voice' taking the place of the nightingale. Even our admiration must have a rest.

"What patience is required when that little cry from the crib breaks up a refreshing slumber! And then, after the spasmodic 'hush, hush, hush,' with the fond hope that now it will be all right with the baby, because it is quiet—a gentle putting of the baby away—a

doze—and the cry again! And this continued until the half-sleeping mother sees the day dawn and rings the bell for the nurse.

"My friends used to tell me that they never saw me impatient or unjust, but what is it that first starts up with the baby's cry? 'I haven't had a good night's sleep this week!'

"However, I will say that I believe the impatient spirit goes to sleep much before I do; and I say it, because I am so grateful for that love which seems to come from heaven, to make us mothers bear the constant calls upon our patience and care without complaint. Alice says that it is woman's best work, and that I ought to be thankful, because the darling is doing me so much good. She is always right, but then to think of having to grow into goodness through the patience of tossing and soothing a baby all through the night!

"I said this lightly, but I did not mean to forget the serious truth that Alice means, that through the little trials of domestic life comes the slowest and surest growth—that every little, as well as great event of life, is education for the kingdom of heaven.

"My dear little Robbie, with so little wisdom in his head, is my teacher after all!

"*Jan.* 2, 18—: Oh dear! I have really got one of my bad states upon me! I have worked and worked, and yet I am just as unreasonable as ever. I should like to ask Alice two things—one about New Year's presents; in the first place, if they are really necessary between husbands and wives to keep up a pleasant feeling, or, if they are merely such a habit that the husband has to be put in mind of them, and so it is

best to give them up? I say that holiday presents are just the best thing to excite a fresh life in the husband and wife, and so I acted yesterday. Such a beautiful dressing-case as I bought Robert, to take the place of his old one; and what kind of an acceptance did it receive? 'How very fine, my dear! It must have cost a pretty sum!' Cost! Yes, that was it. And then more common-sense instead of romance: 'Well I must look you up something to-day; what would you like!' So he had nothing for me, and had just been reminded of his affectionate duty. I would rather have had a plain gold ring, with his hearty thoughtfulness, than a new set of diamonds in this laggard way. And so I told him. He kissed me and laughed at me, and said he had no idea of getting me any diamonds, although he would get me a plain gold ring, with 'hearty thoughtfulness,' if that would please me. I laughed too, and kissed him, notwithstanding the little sigh in my heart that another of my romance-castles had fallen to the ground, for this is the first time Robert has forgotten me since our marriage.

"But here comes the other thing which Alice's wisdom must bear upon to ease my mind. I should like to ask that dear oracle if she believes it is for the best that Robert should go to sleep every evening upon the sofa? He is down town all day, and after his evening paper and cigar, where is he? Robert throws himself upon the sofa, talks a little while, pauses a moment, speaks out energetically a few unimportant words, pauses again for a longer time—'My dear,' says I, 'have you seen John Morant to-day?'—no answer.

"He used to be left alone a good deal when the baby was born, and his own thoughts have probably

made him sleepy. I laughed at him at first, supposing, of course, that I could win him back to reading aloud again, and making himself agreeable. But it was not so easily done. He grew tired every evening, and went to sleep, which I consider has a tendency to test the texture of the marriage bond. Alliteration! But I can't improve the sentence.

"I have tried to look my prettiest; have put on my youngest dresses—have spoken as 'musically' as I could, and I have had at times the greatest encouragement to believe that one of our old engagement evenings was at hand, when my hopes have been suddenly dashed to the ground by a loud and regular breathing from the sofa!

"What a change from energetic rapture to this unspeakable peace! Without a thought that the wife and mother, after her day of little troubles and heavy cares, needs the demonstrative and the tender quite as much, certainly, as the young, happy girl!

"But I am growing serious, when I think how much better is this peace than the wandering of other husbands away from their home, leaving the lonely wives to watch for the hour of their return—midnight or morning, as it may be.

"Now that I have written out all I think, I find I am very happy in my love for Robert and his love for me. If the prospect of true companionship is somewhat obscured by these trifling clouds, I will remember with gratitude how quietly God deals with us; He does not daily announce His love from Mount Sinai, but tells us of it by His constant protection and care. All that He has created follow this law of quiet order. It may be that my domestic world, like the

great creation, is moving around the central sun without speech, but with the harmony of love.

"I will hope and be patient, and will be as loving as ever, although I long for expressions of sympathy, as well as for the spirit of it. I know that I shall be happy if I do this, for, as I write, there comes to me almost as if a voice spoke it to my spiritual senses, 'The end will be peace.'

"*Aug.* 26, 18—: Another little boy. I think that Robert was very much disappointed, for he wanted a little girl, to name 'Cornelia,' he said. But I am satisfied, for now I am to have a 'Paul.' Oh, my dear, dear brother! where are you wandering now? We love you; why will you not come home? It brought back all my longing for him when we named this little new baby, 'Paul;' and Alice was deeply affected when I mentioned the name to her.

"It may be that this little creature, coming like a joy to me, may prove a sorrow—he may wander off, and seem to forget the mother who bore him. Oh how wonderful and mysterious it is, this mother's yearning love for her child, which is never understood until the child becomes a parent. So little understood, that this little baby may grow up and go away into evil, without a thought of what his mother suffers in the doing of his own will.

"But I shall grow unhappy in even imagining such a terrible trouble; I will do the best I can, and the Lord will help me to take care of His own. The world is growing so blindly wise that it begins to question why children should be born at all to care and sorrow? They think of improving on Nature's laws, these grave philosophers, sitting in council with the Most High,

and try to stop the living current of humanity into the world, so as to put a check upon sin and suffering; why, I believe that they could find a more effective work nearer at hand, in their own hearts! I intend to remedy some of the sin and suffering myself in that way, and I shouldn't wonder if my children might be better and happier for it.

"I am very sure that Rose and May are more beautiful on account of their mother's Christian disposition, and will be so thoroughly educated in goodness that they will never go astray. Alice has made goodness lovely to them, and sin ugly; so with this distinction firmly fixed in their young imaginations they will never choose the ugly and reject the lovely. But then Alice is so wise in her teachings that few can hope for her success. She talks to Rose and May calmly under all provocations, and never forces them into obedience, but leaves them to see for themselves how happy they are when they choose to be obedient instead of disobedient. They do not seem to be dependent upon their mother's view of a virtue or a vice, but see it with their own eyes. Alice says, that having first seen clearly in herself a truth which she wishes to teach the children, she finds that they receive it in the same clear way, and that thus she is sure of every step they take. 'The Lord helping them in all,' as she always ends her wise remarks.

"I know that it is really so, for the dear little twins are wonderfully conscientious, and under as perfect discipline as children can be. I am very glad that she has so much to enjoy with them, for she would be desolate if it were not for this happiness.

"*Feb.* 10, 18—: I am sad at heart to-day. Robert

and I seem to be going farther and farther away fror each other. I begin to wonder if we ever loved eac other, and ought to have been married. It is a fearfu thought, but there has been such a coldness betwee us for the last two or three days that I do not see hov we can ever be loving again. Robert seemed so un reasonable that I could not respect him, and he declare that I was 'growing really very self-willed.' I wa sure that I was right in what I said, and he wouldn' listen to any argument, but provokingly declared that i was no use to talk with any one who had made up he mind and wouldn't change it. This is the first tim Robert has really been cross to me since we wer married, although we have differed a good man times.

"I wonder what I must do to be in the right now Must I give up to him and say that I have been wrong when I really don't think I have been? or must I keep my own side because what I said was nothing but the truth? I wish that the Lord would send an angel to us in such sad times of doubt, and explain to us what would be best. Where would be the harm?—and He could do it if He pleased!

"I am quite sure that I would do the right if it were pointed out. But now that I am ignorant, I might hurt Robert if I gave up to him in everything, and I might hurt myself if I trusted to myself always that I was right. Oh, if we who loved each other so much once should never be friends again! If Robert should never kiss me again, and call me his 'dear wife!' If we should have to live together all our lives, and wish that we had never met! I must go and ask Alice about this. I will tell her all, as I would no one else

in the world, and perhaps she can help me with this heartache.

"*Feb.* 11, 18—: 'Heartache!' It is all gone. I went to Alice and poured out my heart to her, asking what I should do that would not be self-willed, and yet just to myself; and she not only told me the best way to act, but also proved herself a prophetess. She brought order out of the confusion of my thoughts by her spiritual philosophy—for she said that married people have their spiritual night and day, darkness and sunshine, as everything in the natural world has its changes from night to day, and from day to night. That every wife has hours of dullness of affection toward her husband, and after this a time of confidence and delight in him. That every husband has hours of coolness with regard to his wife, when he sees her faults, and shows that he judges her rather from his mind than his heart; and yet, that he may in a few days after this give some quiet evidence in his own way, as a man, that he loves and honors her beyond all words. She advised me never to maintain my 'right,' as I might call it, in such clouded states of affection as the one I was complaining of, because it might cause greater darkness and coolness, and put out the beautiful moon of faith which she wanted me to be guided by, until the sun of love rose again.

"Trusting that everything would be well with us would be the very best help. I might not give up what I thought was true, but stop talking about it if it annoyed Robert; and, in this way, my thought of what was true and my act in what was good would influence him powerfully.

"She proved a prophetess in this, that if I were

quiet and kind, it would not be long before Robert would show by some slight token—husbands have a disinclination about showing a change of feeling in any other way—that he was all ready to be friends again.

"The very next day after she said this, Robert, with apparent indifference, as if he did not make an advance to prove that he might have been unkind, but simply thought it might please me, proposed dining with Alice, which I had been trying to persuade him to do for a long time. It was a little thing, to be sure, but from that moment to this it has been all 'day' with us. I don't think I shall be discouraged when another night comes, because I shall understand it, and wait patiently for the morning.

"*Aug.* 15, 18—: What an eventful summer this has proved to us! Paul found, and Alice nursing him, our sudden coming back to New York, and the birth of my little girl! How happy Robert is, now that he has a baby to name 'Cornelia!' It seems as if I could never doubt again that he loves me, when he expressed so much pleasure for me, as well as for himself, that he had a little daughter. He says she will be such a companion to me as the boys grow up, and perhaps grow away from me. I can keep my little girl close to me for a good many years. The boys are so wonderstruck at the delicate little thing they are to call 'sister' that they scarcely dare touch her with their strong, brown hands, but they run in to kiss her about every hour in the day.

"And Robert has grown young again and lover-like (not to me), as he sits gazing upon the sweet little face which, after the boy's sunburnt cheeks, looks so pure that we are almost afraid she belongs to heaven. As

she lies in her little basket lined with rose-color, she is so lovely that her father sits at her feet like a slave, which I am afraid he will prove; that little hand will rule him, I am sure, if this worship goes on. But he wanted a girl at first, and now that she has come in such a beautiful form, his heart is more than satisfied. And my heart too—my darling!

"I think that Alice will leave Paul soon, for Dr. Morris thinks that he is improving, and she must not stay, to have him recognize her. I hope that she will be home in time to receive her sister Helen, and Mr. and Mrs. Talbot, who come by the next steamer, for it would be pleasanter for all, although Phœbe would do her best, the good, faithful girl.

"I am quite anxious to see this sister, who has been a pattern of patience in nursing a sick cousin, now beyond all earthly care. I am glad that Alice sent for her and her guardians, to make her a visit, for I quite long to see them after all the pleasant things that Alice has told me about them. And if Paul does not get better soon, so that Alice can leave him to receive them, I shall invite them here for a while, and so take away any anxiety that Alice might feel.

"My little girl awake! Well, as nurse is down stairs, I will combine her duties with mine. I can't bear at any time to give my darling up to a nurse's care. Ellen is so sweet and caressing before my face, but I don't know how she is behind my back. She came, as they say, 'well recommended,' but a mother's heart alone brings the best recommendation of fidelity and love, and I never feel really safe to have her in any other care. Still, Ellen would not have the heart to hurt my innocent baby!"

XIV.

DAY after day Alice watched by the bedside of her suffering husband, and one morning, which proved near the end of her stay with him, she needed all the strength she could receive from a higher source than herself, as Paul called upon her name in his delirium. She had been sitting quietly by his side, fanning him, and drawing the outline of a plan in her own mind about the coming of the children to help him after she should leave him, when he suddenly exclaimed, in a voice that absolutely terrified her at first,

"Save me, O Alice, save me! There is an evil spirit tormenting me, and you are an angel. Help me!"

And when Alice recovered herself so as to attempt soothing him, he, as suddenly and unexpectedly as at his first appeal, turned upon her in his memory to accuse her of the sorrow that had been brought upon him.

"Why did you leave me, Alice? Why did you madden me by your cruel desertion? If you had been patient with me, had not smiled so bitterly, had not cast me off for ever, I might not have been in this deep, dark place. You sent me here, and you laughed as you said, 'Go where you can find companions like yourself; I am an angel, come not near me!' If you

were an angel, Alice, as you said, you would come even here. No! Angels never come among the dead and buried; they have a home among the living; who can look for the shining of their wings in this dark cave, narrow and cold?"

Paul shivered as he spoke, and Alice took his hands in hers, as if she would warm his heart by their loving pressure; and she spoke so tenderly to him that she fancied him quieted, when again he seemed distressed, and broke forth with new energy:

"You must not bring the children—OUR children, Alice—to this dark place, for there is a demon near, like those that walk up and down the earth, finding no rest. His eye is upon me now, he offers me wine—no! it is the children's blood, and yours, dear Alice. Oh fly! fly! fly!"

And thus, at this terrible moment, Alice learned that Paul knew of the birth of his twin children. It was a sad, and yet happy thought, that he must have loved her so much when he was leaving her that he could not go without being assured of her safety and the birth of his little ones. And her heart ached anew for him, that he should have suffered more from the knowledge that he was giving up, not only his wife, but the dear children she had given him. He had looked forward with such delightful anticipation to the possession of a child; and life had lost the joy at the very moment it was ready for his acceptance.

Those fresh, pure forms of infancy, in which dwell souls under the guardianship of celestial angels, would have brought heaven near to him, with all its healing power; but it was not Gordon's purpose that Paul should be healed, and so he drew him by false philoso-

phy and diabolical will, away from those tender hands which have such wonderful power when they lay in ours.

Still, Paul's love for his children had a beneficial effect, deep and unseen. Gordon's cunning had no plummet wonderful enough to sound a depth he knew nothing of. His line might bring up some earthly substance, which he would analyze with his scientific eye and call it the depth of Paul's affection, because recognized it as something like that which made t depth of his own shallow heart; but the hidden or from the hidden fire, was too deep for his philosoph and so, after all, this gold remained untouched. Gordon had suspected these golden sands upon th shores unknown to him, he would have found som way of gathering them, and of scattering them witho any mercy to Paul.

But Heaven guards these treasures through the ignorance of those who possess them not.

The wife of Paul saw them, for she had eyes to see them from the sympathizing love of her heart, and she was strengthened afresh in the hope that this golden good of her husband's soul would be the means, under the Lord's promise of help, to bring him home. Through his children he should become a man; they should bring him at last to say, "Father, help me, for I can do nothing of myself."

Now, Paul was lying there sick and weary at heart, because he had trusted in himself alone; he had believed himself to be master of himself, and had become a slave; he had raised up a false standard of manliness, and had dragged even this down to a falser one. "I am strong enough to resist my besetting sin,"

had changed to, "I am no longer a man, but a beast." He did not look up and say, "I am a child of God; I will arise and go to my Father."

Even while Alice watched him, the Christian hope grew strong in her breast, that this manly resolution might be the end of Paul's sorrow. She heard him crying to her, "Oh fly! fly! fly!" and she prayed as earnestly as he cried, that HE would flee some day from the enemy of his soul.

She whispered tenderly while she placed her hand upon his forehead, "O Paul, my love, my husband! the Lord be very merciful and gracious unto you and me, for we both are needing Heaven's help. If it were not for my hope of this, I should desire to lie down beside you, with my children, and die, that I might not continue to see this suffering." And tears flowed down her cheeks as she bent and kissed the pale, wan face of her beloved. As she raised her head the light of her eyes drank up the tears, and they beamed with holy rapture as she softly prayed, "I know Thee, Father! What presence, but of Thine own peace, could have come to me and have lifted me up? Yes, I WILL trust and be happy, for I am not left desolate. Jehovah of Hosts is His name, who has come to my soul and has comforted it. I thank Thee that Thou art the Lord of earth as well as of heaven!" Then, sinking upon her knees by the bedside, she remained motionless, and almost without thought, as it seemed, so entirely was she prostrate before the Fatherly presence which had come down to console and support the heart that trusted in Him. Just then her husband raised his hands imploringly, and called her name in such an agonizing appeal that she suddenly arose, de-

termined to answer him in her own name, to see if it might not soothe him, even if he should not realize her presence. Alice raised Paul's head, and placing it upon her bosom, as she would have done that of a child, she sat and talked with him: "I am here, dear Paul; Alice is here, and she loves you as she has loved you through all; she will always love you on earth, and she will never cease to love you even in heaven, unless you choose to turn away from her. And this will not be, dear Paul, for you love her. Oh, this will not be! So be happy that your wife, your Alice, is here, dear, dear Paul." Her soft hand was upon his forehead, and her sweet voice was murmuring these passionate words in his ear. Paul looked up into the face that was almost like an angel's at that moment, and an expression passed over his own which seemed like recognition or joy. Alice felt her pulse quickening with the thought of what might result from her well-intentioned purpose, when the expression of his eyes changed to the wildest look she had yet seen, and he would have thrown himself from the bed if she had not made it impossible by the position she had taken. She had courage and strength enough to place Paul back upon his pillow, while he exclaimed:

"Will you take the name of Alice, Gordon? As if your eyes were not arrows! And your touch like a dagger! Oh, the smile of Alice was like the playing of sunshine upon green banks, and yours is cold, so deadly cold, it chills me, it chills me so deeply. Give me back my lost one's smile to warm me!" Paul's physical condition here partook of his emotion, and he shivered violently, as if struck with a sudden chill. Alice quickly covered him with a blanket, and after a

few moments of quiet, in which he seemed to doze, Paul again took up the comparison which his unformed suspicions gave life to in his disordered brain:

"Is your voice like that of Alice, Gordon! Do you dare call discord music? The voice of a selfish heart like the voice of innocence? The words of Alice were ike the rippling of water over golden sands. There is place in my heart, Gordon, that is full of that music et, and you can never, never put the music out of tune ith your laughter or worldly wisdom. The water is ippling now to my inward ear, and no human power an dry it up, let my enemies cast down fire on my rain as often and as much as they may. My head is ound with red-hot cords. Evil spirits laugh that all ıy boasted coolness of intellect is gone—but a little, oft, cool hand is on my heart, and a dear voice whis-ers, 'Paul,' as only ONE can whisper it."

Paul smiled at his pleasant conceit, and Alice saw in ıat smile the lover and the husband whom she had ost. From the depths of his soul the smile of love ad come, and the poor worn body was only the body, ot the man. She listened breathlessly to the next ords which Paul should utter, for she was strangely appy in this sick chamber, to hear the words ad-ressed to her from the very heart of the unconscious ıvalid before her. There was a little sadness in his ne as he continued:

"She left me and took the children. Alice gave me reproachful look as she turned away, but still I tell ou, Gordon, and all the hateful crew of my enemies, ho sneer at me as I say it, that nothing, even in this ark place where she has sent me, can take away the unshine or the rippling water from my bosom. You

can all torture my brain, but these sweet and lovely things are hidden close from every tormenting spirit—close! close!

"And the children, too, with their soft eyes and waving hair, so much like those of Alice; they shall be taken away and hidden, for this is no place for the lambs of God."

Poor Alice! this was too much for her, hearing the father talking so tenderly of the children he had never seen, but whose loveliness had been pictured to him by his imagination and his fatherly affection, which no wrong-doing or influence could touch. She wept over him, and prayed that this heaven-born love of his children might be a blessing and a happiness to him, and that she might have the wisdom given to her to help in this consummation of human joy. She had learned enough in Paul's sickness to be strengthened in her belief that he was worthy of all her efforts to save him—that if his proud self-dependence could be brought low by slow and sure degrees, he would one day come to have a better strength in dependence upon the Lord, and so never fall again.

This must be her purpose, to bring about with Heaven's help—and the children should be Paul's little ministers, preaching to him daily sermons in smiles and words. And while Paul remained quiet for the rest of that afternoon, Alice thought over her plans—resolving to have both of the children come down to be his companions during his convalescence, and to keep him in ignorance of their relationship, so that he should be in freedom to take what they should give, for the very love of the good, and enjoy the happy surprise at the end of his wanderings.

As Paul was acquainted with the birth of his twins, he might be suspicious at the appearance of both, so Alice resolved to have them both in the house, but only one at a time the companion of Paul, as his mood might require. The gentle, tender May for his sick days of body and mind, and the playful little Rose for his amusement in less serious hours.

And who should take the care of these dear children with such a work to do? Who would be faithful enough and wise enough to teach them constantly what to say and do, and guard them against mistakes?

Her sister Helen!

Paul had never seen her. There was not the slightest resemblance to herself in figure or face; for Helen was tall, as her mother had been, and with dark eyes, small and keen, showing that her intellect was quick to decide her in action. Yes, Helen was the very person for the work, and there was not the slightest doubt in the mind of Alice about that dear good sister's willingness to undertake the task. It would indeed be like offering Helen a gift to present to her a work which she would love, because it benefited others. Any one who opened a way of usefulness to her was a true friend. Why not the truest friend, when the very delight of her life was the forgetfulness of herself, with her heart and hands full of work for the needy? No matter in what shape it came, the bearer of the demand upon her labor and time was received with gratitude, for the Lord had sent him; and it was such a joy to fulfill the highest destiny of the human soul, the destiny of use, which is heaven-born, and finally gives heaven in its fullness.

Helen loved her sister Alice tenderly. The natural,

sisterly affection had been enlarged to the Christian relationship of the Church, when they had knelt together at the altar, and had declared their dependence upon the one Father of their souls. After this there could be no evil in Helen's pride in her sister's beauty and sweetness of character, and none in Alice's praise of Helen's good works; for as high above this as the heaven is above the earth, dwelt their pattern, Jesus Christ, and His presence hallowed all lower things.

Alice remembered the good things which Helen had been doing all her life, and the happiness which she found in them. And she was so glad that here was one, coming even now across the sea, who would heartily do her best, through the dear little ones, to help her and Paul. Paul's quiet state and the silent chamber brought a pleasant influence of peace, and this plan of hers added a ray of joy to it, for she was sure it would succeed.

But this long, gentle sleep of Paul's—was it health and reason coming back? She had sat fanning him, and busy with her thoughts for she knew not how long a time. If he should awaken, and recognize her after all the doctor's warning! Starting up, although guarding against noise, Alice went softly to the door, which was open for the air, and spoke to Mrs. Morant, whom she knew to be in the room adjoining. The low call brought her at once to Alice, who explained her fears, and begged if there were any risk, such as the doctor had declared might be fatal to Paul, that Mrs. Morant would take her place until Paul should awaken.

The sudden realization that her husband's eyes might

have opened upon her as she sat there by his bed, and his returning reason be dazzled to blindness again by her unexpected face, made her faint, with the sense of a narrow escape from danger; and she saw Mrs. Morant seat herself in her chair with an emotion of gratitude that she never forgot.

Throwing herself upon the sofa in the other room, with the doors open between, she awaited with a fear and a hope the first sound of Paul's voice.

The twilight deepened, and still Paul slept. The house was so silent that no sound could escape the listening ears of the wife. It seemed as if some message were expected, great with meaning, and the whole air was motionless, so that the slightest word could be heard.

"Have I been very ill, Mrs. Morant?"

These words were almost whispered in the adjoining room, and yet the familiar tones of her husband's voice were powerful enough to make every nerve in Alice answer as if she had received an electric shock. She had been near her husband, and he had been absent from her as if seas had separated them; now, he had come back to her and she must go! The danger was imminent if he should but hear the rustling of her dress and ask, "Who goes there?" If he should feel her presence and grow wild again through his sick fancies of unworthiness to look upon her face, calling out again, "This is no place for thee, my Alice!" But oh the stern necessity of leaving him when he was himself again! of tearing herself away from his sick bed, where she would have ministered to him so lovingly, and have watched his return to health with the joyous light in her eye which would have

shown him how much his recovery added to her life!

Mrs. Morant must be his envied nurse while she speedily took her way up town, to mature her plans and receive the daily bulletin of her husband's progress through the faithful John.

Alice had lost the reply of Mrs. Morant to Paul's first question in the agitation Paul's voice had excited, but she listened now, eagerly, to the low voice which was so weak that it could utter but a few words without failing him. As it was, she lost many words which fell into low whispers, scarcely distinct even to Mrs. Morant, who sat close by Paul's bedside.

"I have been delirious?"

"Yes, but you must be quiet now; we will not talk about it until you are stronger."

"Have I said anything—" the voice sunk lower and lower, and there were no intelligible words, which Paul seemed to regret, from the anxious expression of his eyes bent upon Mrs. Morant's face.

"Has any one—" Again the weakness overcame him, and Paul was obliged to obey the commands of Mrs. Morant, that he must not attempt any conversation in his exhausted state. He did not give up without a struggle, however, for he uttered short sentences from time to time, closing in whispers, conveying no meaning, and finally ending in quiet; his returned reason speaking through his eyes, and encouraging Mrs. Morant's friendly heart. She knew that the young, loving wife in the very next room was passing through a state of mingled joy and regret, and she was as eager as Alice that she should be left with the sole care of Paul, for fear of consequences. Alice

st go at once; and as Paul dozed again after the rtion he had made to talk, Mrs. Morant went lthily out of the room, and going to Alice, took ı her hands in her own with a smile, half pity and congratulation. Then kissing her forehead, she her, without uttering a word, up stairs to her n.

I must be back in a moment," she almost whis-d, "but you must go. You heard some of his ds—they show that he is sane again, but I can't tell long he may be in his right mind if you are in the e. I trembled every moment for fear that he ld know what I was knowing. He almost seemed atch the door for some one to come in, and I im-ed I saw you at the door, I was so anxious for fear might be tempted to come to him. It takes away ny strength having you here, for I have the two gs to look after, when I should have but one. You n my mind and he is on my mind. I think he will well now if he is kept from talking and excitement. go, and don't let the old doctor come again, be-e he knows him; let him send an assistant, for is all I shall need. I know how to nurse him and get him up, for I have done the same work re."

You are right, my dear Mrs. Morant; I must go. ill take a care from your mind, and I am confident will do everything for my husband that kindness experience can do. Go down to Paul at once, and ll leave quietly, if you will close his chamber door, alf an hour. You will please send my valise by ı to-night, so that I may hear that Paul continues ame. Susan will walk with me to the end of the

street, where I will take a car; for the stopping of a carriage at the door and my going out might excite some questions in Paul's excited mind which might not be satisfactorily answered. Go, now, my dear Mrs. Morant, and my blessing and my thanks go with you in the work you are doing for me!" She kissed the good woman's cheek as the tears of gratitude came into her eyes, and leading her to the door of the chamber, she watched her as she went down the stairs and disappeared in her husband's room, where the wife was to have no place—for how long?

With a sigh Alice put on her shawl and bonnet, and in half an hour she walked down stairs; passing with a light and cautious step the closed door which shut out her husband's face, she did not stop a moment to listen for the sound of his voice, lest he might require the door to be opened again, and she must be away!

So, while Paul grew a little restless in this atmosphere of emotion and secresy, the wife passed out of the house to return to her children, leaving behind her the fragrance of her love and her prayers.

It was a different house for this very fragrance from that which she had entered some weeks ago. The subtile essence had even penetrated Mrs. Morant's heart, and henceforth she was to love goodness and beauty better for the sweetness they had brought to her home. John had been her only companion for years, and, good as he was, he had brought no womanly perfume of household affections into the air of the house; and it was a rare and precious thing, the influence of Alice's lovely person and character upon Mrs. Morant's heart and home.

Mrs. Morant went to her duties without the sense of

loneliness which she had dreaded; and Alice met her sister and children with an affection which had new life, from the plan of work which she had laid out for herself and them.

After the first joy of meeting Helen and the old people, who had accompanied her across the ocean, Alice consulted with them about the best course to pursue for Paul, and found Helen anxious to begin the preparations for her removal down town, that she might watch Paul's convalescence and bring the children into the desired companionship with their father.

The sisters had been so near to each other, although miles of sea and land had separated them, that they met now and sympathized with each other as if they had been together but yesterday. Their sisterly happiness was now complete in meeting face to face, and this was so well understood by each that it needed not to be demonstrated by many words. They went to work in sympathy at once to carry out the desire of Alice's heart, and this was the best expression of their joy at meeting again and of their devoted affection for each other. The one asked a great work from the other's hand, and the other blessed the asking.

XV.

ALL the time that Alice was watching and nursing her sick husband, Gordon lay in an agony of pain and impatience upon his own sick bed.

He had heard that Paul was delirious, and that he was in the hands of friends. In consequence of this he was racked with anxiety for fear that they would win his victim from him. The only consolation that Gordon could cherish was, that Paul was not yet free to go where he might be led by others. He was confined to a sick room, and could not take any steps at present to counteract his own unchristian plans.

As earnestly as a good man hopes for the welfare of another, Gordon hoped that Paul might linger in his room, helpless and suffering, until they could meet in full health again; when the power for evil should conquer the power for good.

The angels of mercy did not manifest themselves to Gordon's darkened eyes, and so he thought very slightingly of their presence and influence in the world. The ministers of evil were his companions, and he recognized their work in all the high and low places of the earth, believing in what he saw, and leaving the faith in an unseen power "to cowards who were not able to fight their own way."

He did not doubt his triumph over Alice if he could

have his bodily strength again, and so he retarded his recovery by his eagerness to be at work. The gloom of a sick room is often enlivened by the graces of a healthy spirit; but in Gordon's chamber there was not a ray of that glorious sun which shines through patient and trusting souls. He inwardly chafed under the bonds which bound him, and asked of his nurse and physician how soon he might expect to throw them off; not because he desired to prepare himself to thank Heaven for his release, but that he might go out to do battle with the ministers Heaven had sent to Paul.

Paul was improving daily, and was able now to send notes of sympathy and condolence to his more feeble friend, which were far from healing balsam to the man who received them. For Paul spoke of a delightful rest that was taking the place of the unquiet he had suffered from so long. He told him of a beautiful child who had come to him like a vision and breath of heaven, that she called herself his "little nurse," and was gay when he was cheerful, was gentle and soothing when he was weary. She had come with her aunt to make a visit to Mrs. Morant, and he hoped that the lovely little creature would finish the work which she had begun, of softening his heart toward all the world.

It was misery to Gordon to see that this new object of love was awakening in Paul that interest in the human and beautiful which he had attempted to put to sleep for ever. In his delirious rage he cursed the fetters of disease which were eating into his strong limbs, which were binding him day by day to a hopeless fate, and were so long depriving him of his freedom

to work the destruction of Paul, who now seemed to be enclosed by angels' wings.

To lie there and know that he could not harm him. To be chained there by anguishing pain, and yet have the sharper dagger at his heart—the conviction that the man whose soul he was bound to destroy was walking through pleasant places, hand in hand with a little child! That little child was working in the soil which he had hardened; her smiles could warm it; her soft, pure hands could make it ready for seed; and he had heard enough of the wonderful dew of heaven to fear that it would come down and water the earth thus prepared, and flowers might spring up instead of thorns and thistles.

Gordon felt that the influence of the child so enthusiastically written about, would be more powerful with Paul than that of the wisest intellect, because he knew the quality of Paul's heart. It had only been by constant watchfulness and cunning that he had darkened Paul's understanding of what was true and good; and now that innocence was by him, with an open face and tender love, Gordon had reason to fear that the heart he had endeavored to narrow would grow large again, and take in this innocence. That the little child would sit there enthroned, rule by her winning words, and have for her footstool all the evil things which he had cast from his own soul into Paul's!

Gordon was able to write but a very few words in reply to Paul's notes as he gradually recovered the use of his hand; these were only friendly and congratulatory, and by mournful hints of his own weakness keeping fresh a bond of sympathy between them. Gordon trusted nothing to pen and ink; his writing

could not be like the eye that had fascinated and triumphed; the hand that used the pen could not at the same time offer the wine that would make all arguments plausible and all foolishness look like wisdom. But Gordon vowed to himself that the very first time Paul should visit him he would try his power to undo the work that "meddlesome child" had done, and bring Paul to shame again.

Paul's progress in getting well was very slow, and it was months before he could walk out. In this long period of convalescence the plan of Alice was carried on by Helen. The children by turns, as they were needed, were the nurses, playfellows and companions of their invalid father. They were still dressed precisely alike, but very simply, in their new character as guests of Mrs. Morant; always neat, and exquisitely clean, they were as lovely in their calico dresses and white aprons as in their tucked muslins and sashes of up town. There was a charm about them which Paul could never understand; he knew them both, but as one interesting child, who seemed to possess a wonderful power to charm him in every mood, and whose beauty and grace satisfied even his poetical eye. His little companion had told him that her name was "May—Rose," because she was born in May, and because she was "just like a flower that comes after the cold winter," so her mother had said; "and there is nothing nicer than flowers, uncle, you know!"

"Uncle" was a safe title for the little ones; and as they had never known him as father, they could make this name a vehicle of many a child-like caress without betraying a nearer relationship. The tender words of love which the children learned to say with so much

feeling touched the heart of Paul during the wear hours of his recovery, and he almost dreaded to he that some day their visit would be at an end; for th child had said that she "didn't mean to stay at Mr Morant's all the time, only until they got a nice hom to live in altogether, or father—" and here the child eyes fell and her voice was very low—"will com home to live with us always, as he will by and by."

Paul had the delicacy to ask no questions about th father of whom the child spoke so softly with dow cast eyes; for there might be some unfortunate, if n guilty history connected with his name. But h thought the father must be very dull in the apprec ation of such a treasure as this child, or be steeped i the love of evil, to linger in coming home. Perha the mother might not be the "darling" that the chil believed in!

Paul became at last very dependent upon his litt nurse for his hope and good spirits. If she were n with him in the morning as soon as he was ready f her, he became lonely and dejected. He was never s contented as when the bright little Rose was dancin around him, or May was sitting at his feet, listenin with thoughtful face to his rare talk about the wonde ful things in every-day science, which he could so we adapt to the child's comprehension and enjoyment.

Rose, in the abundance of her animal life, was ofte sorely puzzled to do her part as she knew her moth desired it done. If Paul had been curious or ol serving, he would have wondered at many a hal uttered sentence or childish embarrassment. But fr from all suspicion of the conspiracy, this little chil could have no possible connection in his mind with h

twin girls, who were in their mother's home in England. The impulsive little creature would say and do things which she would remember at once were very careless, and to cover her confusion she would find a laughing excuse to run out of the room to tell her Aunt Helen how thoughtless she had been. And then, perhaps, May would be sent in to take her place, saying that she was going to be very quiet, for "uncle was growing tired."

Thus these two children, who had been educated all their lives with the greatest care for the purpose of helping their father when the time should come, were easily guided by Helen in their present work.

They already loved their father dearly, and every day they wound themselves more closely around his heart. In his weakness of body and freedom from temptation, Paul was peculiarly susceptible to all good influences; and Alice knew that many true thoughts would come with the pure hands clasped around "dear uncle's" neck.

His generous nature reciprocated the child's devotion, and instinctively desired to lavish good things upon the little nurse, in return for the comfort she brought him.

One morning, Paul was sitting in his easy-chair, while the busy Rose was dancing around, pretending to dust the books which filled every available nook of the little room. The happy invalid watched with delight the beautiful child, and listened with a smile to the constant prattle which she kept up, while she did wonderful things in her own conceit. But the "dusting and cleaning up" which Rose had declared so necessary, although it was very charming for a time,

at length wearied Paul, who was not strong yet, so he said to her, lovingly, "You are a dear little girl, but I am tired now, and would like to have you come and sit down quietly by me, and let the dusting go. We look pretty nice, I think?"

Rose looked at him earnestly for a moment, and then came with a quick step to his side. Kissing him with the same zeal with which she did everything she found to do, she whispered while she kissed him, "Poor, dear uncle, I am so sorry I have tired him! But I had to be so busy! Now don't be lonely because I'm going out a minute, and you can just sit back in your chair and shut your eyes; that will be a nice rest."

The child gave one more kiss and stole softly to the door. Looking back with a sunny smile, she kissed her fingers, nodded gayly, and disappeared. The little nurse who returned to him was like the calm of twilight after the busy day. May had come to her father, now that he was in need of her gentle ways, and as she sat upon a cushion at his feet and held his hand caressingly in hers, Paul smoothed the hair back from the uplifted face, and looking into it affectionately, he said:

"Uncle is very grateful for the love which his darling shows in subduing her spirits to meet his different states. When uncle is tired, his nurse is a quiet, thoughtful little nurse, sitting here as if she had put away for ever her bustling, dancing feet. Now, what shall he do for her, to show how much he loves her for this?"

May knew that there was one thing her mother desired very much, and she was to ask for it when Paul

got well; and here was an opportunity which it seemed to her ought not to pass without some hint of what she meant to claim by and by. So she answered quite softly, but with a very pleading look in her eyes, "Don't give me anything yet, darling uncle, if you please. But when you are quite well I shall want something so much, so very much. And then you will give it to me, won't you? Oh, do!"

"Will it be a doll, my dear little girl, with the bluest of eyes, that shut and open obediently to your will? Such charming eyes! And flaxen hair, curling in ringlets down its waxen neck! and dressed in Parisian style, with a wonderful wardrobe, packed in a wonderful trunk, ready for Saratoga or the mountains, as the little mother shall think best?"

May laughed at the words and tone, but suddenly grew thoughtful over the tempting offer. But that dear mother at home! It was not this that she had explained to May and Rose, would be the best thing for them to accept from their father. She answered quickly, "No; not the very largest doll you could buy, or the very nicest dressed. It isn't that, I want, dear uncle. But you won't ask me now; please don't give me anything now, because by and by I shall tell you what I want so VERY much."

Paul long remembered the earnestness of the voice and the sweet eyes full of meaning; but he attributed all this to some childish desire which she felt would be too much to ask him to gratify until they should be better acquainted, if possible, and she have a better right to ask it of him.

With an inward determination to grant whatever the child might ask when she was ready to make the

request, and that this gift should be but the beginning of what he should do for her pleasure and good, Paul answered with a smile, "It shall be as you wish, little one; we will wait till I am well for your extraordinary desire. So don't be afraid to ask it of me then, for you shall have it, even if it should take half the stock of the greatest toy merchant in New York!"

The soft eyes brightened, and a smile drew a dimple to her cheek, as May heard these words. But she was thinking of her dear mother then, and she felt very proud and happy that she had managed things so well. She longed to run and tell Aunt Helen, but at this moment, mistaking the cause of her joy, Paul lifted her to his knee, exclaiming, laughingly, "Ah! now I have it! A whole stock of toys, not merely an insignificant doll. It is a baby-house as large as life, with bridegroom and bride, and servant, and furniture for chamber and parlor and kitchen, and a Dinah to cook the meals!"

"Oh, that would be beautiful!" exclaimed the child, true to the instincts of her girlhood, and for the instant forgetful of the purpose which had been in her mind; "it would be so very nice! And little dolls, little bits of ones for children, uncle! And their father and mother shall be so kind to them, and take just such care of them as mother does of us—of me—and I shall never let them cry—" Here the little confusion of her pronoun with the benevolent idea of keeping her little household from sorrow, brought back the memory of her work, and the "darling mother," whose heart was to be filled with joy.

The childish castle of her imagination fell suddenly to the ground; the old, earnest expression came to the

eyes, and she said in a pleading voice, "Oh no, not a baby-house, dear uncle; that isn't what I really want, and you won't buy it for me, will you? It will be something so much nicer, so ever so much nicer than that, which you will buy me, won't you?"

It seemed as if the shadow of the child's memory had also fallen on the father's heart, for he did not answer her; and the unusual glow which had spread over his pale face while he talked with his little nurse about the gift she had desired had faded all away. He gazed vacantly upon the floor, while his hand played mechanically with the golden ringlets upon his breast.

For some moments neither spoke. Paul's thoughts wandered across the sea to the dear young wife and the unknown children, whose heads ought then to be pillowed upon his bosom. His own hand had dashed the cup of an exquisite joy from his lips when he had tasted the miserable draught of self-indulgence in its place. "Weak and foolish man, to choose that mad revel in London, and the shame of yielding to his weak point of character, in the place of a home which would have had the smile of Alice for its light, and the steps of his children for its music!" So he muttered to himself, bitterly, asking himself continually, "What am I now? Where is my home?"

May, looking up suddenly, saw the change in her father's face, and putting her arms about his neck she kissed him on each cheek, and then sliding down from his lap, went to the couch, arranged the pillow, came back to him, and taking his hand in both of hers, said winningly:

"You are tired, very tired, dear uncle; please rest a

little while, and I will sing a pretty verse; perhaps it will make you go to sleep."

Yielding passively to the gentle drawing of the child's hand, Paul allowed her to lead him to the couch, and throwing himself upon it weary and dispirited indeed, took little notice of the care of his nurse, who had drawn a footstool to his side, and with her soft hand upon his forehead, as she had seen others soothing away a headache, began to sing in a low, sweet voice a verse which her mother had prepared for her.

The words had been adapted to the measures of a chant full of harmony with the call of love, and the voice so carefully trained to give them expression fell upon the weary man's ear like the breath of angels:

> "God's loved ones from the ark of their safety above,
> O'er life's flood of evil watch their heavenly dove;
> Oh let the winged messenger return to its goal,
> With a green olive leaf from thy penitent soul."

The musical tones of the child and the burden of the words affected the listener strangely. He answered in his heart the persuasive accents; he longed to know that the olive had budded after the deluge of the false in his soul, and that it might prove a celestial token of beauty and joy to him. But the heart that was thus affected still trusted in its own strength. It loved goodness, and resolved to make itself pure again through its own power, forgetting that there is no power in heaven or upon the earth save the Lord's!"

Paul believed himself capable of accomplishing, after this, the thing he had so miserably failed in before.

In the quiet of his own room, and with the companionship of his innocent nurse, Paul had no opportunity, neither the desire, to indulge in the evil thing which had tempted him in the world outside, and he mistook a state of passiveness for moral strength.

As the little songstress finished her chant, Paul raised himself from his reclining position, and looking with brightened eyes upon the child, said cheerfully: "See, my little May, what you have done for me! I am better already, and rested by your singing; but, perhaps you are sorry that I did not go to sleep?"

"Oh no, uncle, I am sure I am not sorry at all, for you look so happy and well—just as if you had had a good long nap. It isn't any matter if you don't go to sleep at all, when you look so nice."

"I couldn't look so nice always without some sleep, you know! But if I ever look tired again, darling, sing to me that beautiful chant; and if you ever live to see me a good man, as I believe you will, for I am determined upon that, you may tell your mother that through her dear little girl I hope an olive leaf has been plucked from a penitent soul."

May was wise enough to know the value of this message, which, one of these days, she was to give to her mother. With child-like confidence she believed that it would not be long before her father would bear the message himself; and they would all be happy "at home." She must run and tell Aunt Helen the joyful news that her father was a good man in real earnest, for he had "determined upon that," and she must remember the very words! So she rose up hurriedly, with her eyes all sunshine, and kissing her father warmly, told him he must go to sleep a little while, as he had said

he must, and he wouldn't go to sleep while she talk with him.

Paul held her fast, while he kissed her again ar again, and he let her go at last, with her promise th she would come again to him after dinner; "For," h said, "I cannot get well, you know, if you neglec me."

"I will be sure and come, dear uncle, because, o course, I want to, and people always do what the want to—they never forget that."

"Well, well! that is a philosophy which I can gainsay, little one. So I shall expect you; and I than you for the pretty compliment."

The child kissed her hand to Paul as she went ou and ran quickly to her room to tell Aunt Helen th experience of the last hour—how cheerful "uncle had seemed after she had sung to him about the dov and the olive leaf, and how earnestly he had said th message to her mother that she repeated, about bein helped through her little girl. Oh, she was "so sur so very sure now, that he was coming home!"

Helen sympathized with the hopeful child over a the good signs. She would not shadow her joyfu spirit with any doubt concerning man's promises She even allowed herself to indulge in pleasant vision of Paul's return to Alice in the strength of true man hood from the Father. She would be grateful an happy for the present, and would try to be quiet an prepared for any future trial.

XVI.

AS Paul improved in health he took a great deal of pains to entertain and instruct his little companion. Every night, Helen reviewed with the children the experience and teaching of the day, so that both should be alike benefited and prepared to meet their father as one.

She required of each as minute an account as possible of their conversations with Paul; and this exercise kept their minds and memories bright beyond their years. Their father gave them knowledge that was simple and useful, and in such a practical way that they comprehended it much better than they could have done from the study of books. He had a wonderful faculty for this kind of oral teaching, and he enjoyed it more and more as he saw how interested the child became in it. His body grew strong, and his mind felt the influence of this returning health. After such a lingering illness it seemed to him as if he were born into a new world of goodness and happiness. Free from pain and weakness at last, he determined to trust the world again, to seek his friends, confess his former weakness of purpose, be received with joy, devote his life to Alice and the children, live happy till a ripe old age, and leave a circle of mourning friends to weep over "the good old man, who, in his youth had conquered himself."

His first call, however, must be upon his invalid friend Gordon; and ordering a carriage—promising his little nurse that he would not be absent more than an hour, so as not to get weary—he started for the bedside of the man who had burnt up each note of Paul's as soon as he had received it, for the satisfaction of seeing the flame eat up the hopeful words and the child's name.

To this man Paul went, with his soul full of delight that he could breathe again the the air of heaven, and with gratitude that he was no longer bound as Gordon was. But when he opened the sick man's chamber door, the contrast of his companion's condition struck him more painfully than he had imagined it could have done, and his sympathy so subdued him that he could not keep his eyes from tears while expressing his sorrow at finding Gordon looking so ill.

Gordon, however, had no idea of being pitied in this manner. He winced under the sympathy as if it had been a touch of neuralgia, and he vowed a new vow that he would be revenged for this triumph over him. But the face of the sick man showed no sign of this, and the pressure of the hand was warm and friendly.

"Sit down, Paul, my friend; this is kind indeed, to hurry yourself to visit a poor rascal, but I was really expecting it of you, and I know that you are glad not to disappoint me."

Paul had recovered himself somewhat in putting aside his hat and gloves, and as he seated himself in a chair by the bedside, he found voice to say,

"This is the first time I have been out, and I give you my first call as much from affection as from duty, you may be sure."

"Of course I am sure, and of course you are sure
at I am thankful enough to see you, for this bad luck
s brought a dreadful famine upon me of things to
k at and people to talk to. My eyes are contracted
king at four papered walls of brown flowers and
e leaves; my mouth is getting up a rebellion against
innocent drinks which the doctor, fresh perhaps
n his wine-cellar, declares are the most desirable
nutritious of beverages; and my ears, instead of
ading out nobly as a man's ears should, to catch
the world's thunder as well as its fun, are shrivel-
up, because there is nothing but 'How are you to-
?' for the reveille and tattoo played upon their invis-
drums."

aul laughed, and was pleased in his heart to find
his selfish rejoicing in health was not after all such
evil thing, when Gordon seemed in such good
its; and he answered with earnest delight, "What
lief it is to me, Gordon, to find you in such good
tal condition, when I had fancied you given up,
y and soul, to blue-devils, whom I should have to
cise with the prayers of all the saints in the calen-

You have had such a hard time of it that I fan-
your brilliancy would be so entirely put out by the
ery compounds of your diet that I should not find
ark left."

A hard time I have had of it, indeed; but what
ld have been the use of tossing about until I lost
wits, or grumbling about it until I lost my reason?
, if I had some of the superfluous wealth of
sus, I would buy up this whole square and make a
ire of every house—I am so tired of everything
it here. I wouldn't hire this room again for the

gold that might be heaped from floor to ceiling! Those abominable flowers—please move your seat, Hamilton, to cut off the vision of that bunch that haunts me for being browner than the rest—those abominable flowers have stirred me up to such a passion that I should like to fight the man who invented them with a fiendish desire to drive sick people mad. And then those enormities from the hand of the weaver in my carpet; they have stared at me until I have lost all sense of the beautiful. But really, how are you, my boy? I am so indignant at being buried alive in this graceless coffin, lined with such detestable flowers, and carpeted in such poor taste, that I haven't allowed you to tell me any of your own grievances, and your recovery from them."

Paul replied that his grievances were forgotten in his recovery from them, which was made manifest by his presence; and he exclaimed, admiringly, "What a splendid Christian you would make, Gordon, if you can be so full of life merely from your own courage and wit! Why, you look as free from trouble, now that I have become a little used to your pale face, as a young girl at her lover's side. Say, Gordon, where are the springs of your philosophy, that I may go there and drink?"

"I would answer that the springs were on this bed," answered Gordon, with a facetious soberness of expression which amused Paul, "if it were true, in a comfortable sense; but, as it is, I must more particularly designate the springs as lying within the brain which reclines upon the bed. You see that I wouldn't be such a fool as to make myself any more miserable than I need to be, by becoming a slave to the ills of the

body. It is enough to have the body dissected with sharp knives, and for variety have little daggers amusing themselves with all my joints, without letting my spirits run down because I haven't the pluck to wind them up. It is really curious to find out how much your will can do while the daggers are working at you like little devils without any conscience! I have been so indifferent to them at last, that I have let them go at it as they pleased, while I have sung whole operas through and through—have danced most complicated PAS on my light intellectual toe, and have painted in my inner studio the most charming pictures of morning hunts and fine field-sports, which have been equal to Rosa Bonheur's happiest conceptions."

"It takes a pretty strong heart and mind to make such a man!" replied Paul, with enthusiasm.

"Oh pooh! don't flatter me! I only said to myself, where's the wisdom of lowering your spirits into a grave, even if your body is in a coffin shocking to good taste? I went in for the philosophy of separating the soul from the body while the latter is getting repaired, and keeping it in the realms of fancy until the flesh comes into reasonable order again, so as to be worthy of enjoying its company. This is the way that I have kept myself pretty fresh, so as to make a call upon the world this month, which I mean to do, even if I perish in the attempt."

"But, my fine fellow, you can't do it; you are brave enough for anything in spirit, but your body will break down under you if you make any such attempt!"

Even now the perspiration stood in drops upon Gordon's face from his exertion in keeping up his part; but he declared Paul to be all wrong in his prognosti-

cation, and reiterated his resolution to be out before the month was over, now that Paul had set the example, that fresh air was good for an invalid and must be sought.

After a little more earnest argument, Paul thought that Gordon was suffering more than he was willing to admit, and that he himself was feeling the fatigue of his first absence from his room; so he rose to leave, with the hope that their next meeting would find them both stronger and able to compare experiences in the busy world.

"Call upon me as soon as you are able," said Paul, with a parting grasp of Gordon's hand, "for I want to show you the sweetest child and the wisest child that ever lived."

Did Paul notice the expression that came over Gordon's face as he said these words? No. He was busy with his preparations for leaving, and had gone to the window to see if his carriage was before the door. Perhaps Gordon would have been more careful if Paul had not been so occupied. As it was, his last words to Paul and his last look were full of friendship.

Paul returned to his room with renewed confidence in the man who had such power to fascinate him by his conversation, and with a new admiration for the philosopher who, in the midst of exquisite suffering, could put himself at such a manly distance from cowardice and despair.

How was it with Gordon? When Paul had left he laughed very quietly, but satisfactorily, to himself; and the white hand would have stroked his beard with the old triumph if a sharp pain had not changed the smile into a curse.

XVII.

PHŒBE came down stairs one evening, prepared for a walk with John, and was so bewildering in her blue muslin and ribbons that for a moment the manly independence of the lover was put aside for a slave-like subjection to her charms. That he was really the accepted lover of this pretty girl seemed all at once too great a happiness to be real; and yet, if it were a dream, some one must awaken him at once, so that he should lose no time in sleep when his life-long work must be to find on earth the realization of his dream!

However, he overcame in a very little while this intoxication of his eyes, which was somewhat like unconsciousness of real things; and, like a sensible man as he was, simply bestowed a kiss upon Phœbe's cheeks as a token of his admiration, without saying a word of his morbid belief that he could not be wide awake. The practical little Phœbe would have poorly understood such a poetical license.

Phœbe and John went out together into the moonlit street to roam and talk for an hour or so, as lovers often do, and had been requested by Alice to call at Mrs. Benedict's before their return, to see if the baby had recovered from a slight attack of illness she had heard about in the morning.

They walked and talked, the hand of Phœbe alternately held and dropped, as the disturbing influences of other promenaders operated upon John's arm; the sense of propriety constantly jostling the conjunctive impulse of love, until Phœbe's soft voice took an inquisitive tone, which John was well aware meant business.

"John?"

"I am all attention!"

"I want you to tell me the difference between the Democrats and Republicans."

John knew that serious thoughts had been working in that little head, and this was the hour for the pouring forth of her own conclusions.

He was in the arena of politics for the rest of the evening; he must put on the toga of the forum, about which he had formed a grand idea in his public-school education, and must lead this young and pretty disciple up the steep and slippery heights of political knowledge. But how could he do it? Well, he would try:

"My dear, did you say that you would like to know the difference between the two political parties dividing the land?"

That was pretty well for a commencement; there was dignity, and a little condescension, proper to an assumed position as teacher.

"Yes, John, I would," replied Phœbe, meekly, as if she had no secret weapons prepared for battle; "for one party says that its candidate is a perfect gentleman, and born to be a President, while the other says that the country will be ruined if its candidate shouldn't be elected. It seems to me that the newspapers ought to

tell the truth; but here are two different stories, and how is anybody to know who is who, and what is what?"

"Indeed, that is so," said John, very gravely, in reply, wondering in his soul where Phœbe was going to bring him up; "but we will come back to your original question, which was, if I remember right, 'what is the DIFFERENCE between the Democrats and the Republicans, my dearest John;' were these your words?"

"You put in 'my dearest John,'" replied Phœbe, laughing, "but all the rest is right."

"Was 'my dearest John' wrong then, Phœbe, and must I take it back?"

Did John mean to turn the question to one of love, and so finish the evening walk in a lover-like fashion, as he much preferred?

Phœbe's practical turn of mind often changed the current of her lover's romance, and this was one of the occasions when she was bent upon knowledge;

"You needn't take it back, but keep it as if I said it, John; but please tell me the difference between the two parties."

"I have a world of information upon the subject, Phœbe; but, really, as I begin to look carefully over this mass of knowledge, I honestly confess that I don't see anything truer to give you than this—that there is very little difference between the Democratic and Republican parties."

"Very little difference, John!" exclaimed Phœbe, in surprise; "why don't they join together then and love their country, without so much quarreling and calling names?"

"Do children of the same family ever quarrel, and call each other names, my good little Phœbe? You may have known very little of it yourself, but the world knows a great deal of it. I will now tell you, in confidence, (as soon as we get under the branches of that great tree in the Park, so that we shall not be observed by the passers-by), what each party is striving after, for I am in the secrets of each."

Phœbe was a good deal suspicious always of John's confidential and serious moods, because they were so unnatural to him; and as they walked toward the friendly shadow of the tree, she doubted her submissiveness in being led to play into his hands.

Still, she was a little curious to know what he might say under the tree, as quite a number of other young girls might have been, so she went quietly along and said not a word.

When they reached the secluded spot John looked carefully around, and stooping to Phœbe's ear to whisper the secrets confided to him by both political parties, he suddenly kissed again and again the rosy cheek so near to his lips, and then gravely drawing himself up as he walked away from the spot, he exclaimed, "Loaves and fishes, my dear—loaves and fishes!"

Phœbe was startled by the whole proceeding; she was really seeking information upon a point which interested her, as connected with the country she loved, and here was John laughing at her in his heart, and kissing her, and repeating "loaves and fishes," which had no apparent bearing upon the subject!

"I ask your pardon, Phœbe!" exclaimed the incorrigible young man, as he stopped suddenly in apparent confusion and looked into her face; "I really beg your

pardon; but I should have whispered ever so many things in your ear if your hat hadn't been so small that I was close to your cheek before I knew it!"

"Oh, John! Can't you ever be thoughtful, and tell me the things I want to know?" And there was a little tremble in her voice, as Phœbe spoke, as if she were hurt, or else trying to hide her amusement at his yielding so readily to temptation, and laying the blame to her fashionable little hat.

"If you will forgive me, Phœbe, for that bit of gallantry under the tree," replied John, with an attempt at penitence, "I will promise to talk reasonably;" and putting her arm again in his, he looked into her face with an expression not far from the desire to accomplish another successful ruse when an opportunity should present itself.

"I don't believe in your being sorry, and wanting me to forgive you, for you don't look like it, John; but talk reasonably, as you say you will, just for once."

"Just for once, Phœbe! Didn't I talk reasonably when I told you one evening just like this that I loved you dearly and asked you to 'live with me and be my love?' I will take it for granted that you didn't mean what you said to me, my dear, just now, and I will begin upon politics at once." (No one in sight, so Phœbe's hand was comfortably settled in John's.)

"You see, my dear, in the first place, that earth isn't heaven, although you may meet an angel now and then to remind you of heaven" (a significant pressure of Phœbe's hand), "and so you must not be disappointed to find that every man looks out for his own interest in politics, as in everything else. What I say

about myself, and you mustn't think any less of me if I tell you that John Morant sees on what table his bread and butter is spread out for him, and is blind to a good many things in those who pay the bills out of the treasury of New York. It's a pretty general way with subordinates in the cultivation of their eyesight, and it's profitable both to the employers and the employed."

"You don't mean to say, John, that you don't care at all who gets into office, and who is President, if you can only get a living from the government?"

"Well, no, Phœbe, perhaps not quite so bad as that. But I can't pretend to be any more virtuous than I am, with those sweet eyes questioning me. I love my country, of course, all the way from Maine to California, and would fight for it to the last drop of my blood, only I shouldn't like to be taken at my word, because while you are alive I don't care to die; but the truth is, darling, that it's very discouraging—very discouraging indeed—to be a genuine Christian politician, now-a-days, looking out only for the good of the people, for one would be so lonely, you know!

"I've got a prospect of some loaves and fishes, which will be very convenient to have in the house when I find myself the husband of a dear little wife; and I must really be conscientious toward myself and her, and not allow any one else to take what I can honestly lay my hands upon. You see that my conscience must not be troubled more than that of other folks, by the discussion of great moral points when I am laying up stores for housekeeping and a housekeeper!"

"It doesn't satisfy me at all," replied the housekeeper alluded to, with her eyes looking up straight

er lover's face; and then dropping them in a little
ointment at the smile they met, they walked
y along until she continued, with a tone almost
the departure of so much self-sacrifice and sin-
ndedness, "I don't see where all the pure spirit
shington has gone, that there doesn't seem to be
f it left. They have Washingtonian societies for
hing else but politics; why don't somebody start
ty in the Democratic or Republican parties, and
very member pledge himself to be straightfor-
and never intoxicated by evil passions; don't you
t would be a good thing, John?"

ı, very good, Phœbe, very, only I couldn't join,
e I am a public officer under his honor the
, and I should surely lose my place. I really
't begin such a work; perhaps I will think of it
these days, when I have laid up a little money
ort my family; I can't afford to be a second
ngton just yet."

hat a pity," said Phœbe, quietly, as if she had
ittle heed to her lover's selfish exposition of the
and fishes, "that Washington didn't leave a
of splendid boys like himself, so that there
have been a chance of having some of his wis-
ınd goodness descend through them into the
House and Congress!"

pity indeed!" exclaimed John; "and there, I am
, Phœbe, 'for once;' but as he didn't, perhaps
ody else may have some splendid boys, whose
will be the leader of a great political reform,
'The Woman's Universal Suffrage Washingto-
ociety;' while the father leaves all these matters
hand, and, turning his back upon politics, be-

comes a broker in Wall street, and earns his bread in this honest way."

John laughed at his own conceit; but as Phœbe knew very little about Wall street, although she may look into it one of these days, she continued, without noticing the laugh:

"Oh, wouldn't it be delightful to go to Washington some day, and see a whole united family of Representatives and Senators, real brothers—"

"And sisters?" interrupted John.

"No, indeed!" exclaimed the child-like Phœbe, earnestly, with her heart fixed upon one benevolent idea, which was not to be disturbed by her lover's pleasantries; "no sisters at all; THEY had better be wives and mothers, I think! But a whole family of peaceable brothers, just as if they were the sons of Washington, who was the 'Father of his country,' and were determined to be worthy of helping along the work he began."

"I am proud of you, my little Phœbe! and if I should ever become one of those same peaceable brothers in Washington, by following the lead of your wise head and womanly heart, I should be prouder still in hearing you called the 'Honorable Mrs. Morant;' how does it sound—pleasant?"

"If you should ever be called an Honorable, John," replied Phœbe, unconsciously placing her disengaged hand upon his arm with gentle emphasis, "I hope you will be one in real earnest; but, of course, it is all nonsense that we are talking. You will never be a Representative or Senator, and I don't think I should want you to be, because so many puzzling questions of the greatest importance to the whole country would

be brought up, which would trouble you more than I am troubled now, a great many times."

"Deliver me from that!" exclaimed John, laughing; "but here we are at Mrs. Benedict's. Go in and see the baby, and rest your mind after it's wonderful exercise upon public affairs."

Phœbe entered with her pass-key, and leaving John below, went up to the nursery; but she did not come down to John, to walk home with him for many a day and night.

The little "Cora," as she was called, in abbreviation of her mother's name, was lying on her mother's lap, with all the symptoms of scarlet fever in her dear, sweet face. And when Phœbe appeared, the blue eyes opened for a moment in a wondering way, as if to ask if a good friend had come to take away these new and strange feelings of discomfort which bound her in helplessness. The heavy eyelids dropped again before the question could be answered, and Phœbe looked into Cornelia's face to read there how much anxiety was felt for the child.

She saw, in a moment, that the mother needed help, both in the effort for self-control and in her bodily fatigue; and hastily throwing off her hat and shawl, Phœbe took the baby tenderly into her own strong arms, without a word of argument, so fully was she understood; and with a "Thank you, Phœbe," Cornelia walked toward the window to hide the tears that had been kept back so long.

While Phœbe soothed the child, she spoke softly to the mother from time to time:

"Please cry, my dear Mrs. Benedict, for it will do you good! Don't mind me at all, or think that I shall

say to myself that you are not feeling right about the baby's sickness. I believe if people weren't ashamed to cry, they wouldn't feel so badly, for they keep themselves bound up and hard, because they think that only babies cry. It seems to me that we shouldn't have the blessing of tears if they weren't meant to wash away the dust from our eyes, so that we can see the clearer — I like to see you cry, my dear Mrs. Benedict, for you will feel so much better for it by and by."

Cornelia, thus encouraged, cried to her heart's content; and while the friendly philosopher had the satisfaction of watching the little creature lulled to sleep upon her bosom, the heaviness of Cornelia's grief was gradually giving way to peace. But poor Phœbe's heart was grieved to see the trouble of this dear, true friend, who had shielded her from blame in the days of her carelessness, and had been a sister to her ever since; so the lover below was put entirely out of her mind until he sent up to know if she intended to remain much longer, as he had waited quite patiently for her to come down, and it was getting late.

Phœbe gave a little start at the chambermaid's message, which brought her to shame for neglect of John: but she could not condemn herself much for the old, grateful love which for a moment had conquered the new.

"Oh yes, Mary; why, I really forgot," said Phœbe, with a blush. "Please tell John that I am very sorry I did not let him know before this, that I should stay all night. Tell him, please, that the baby is so sick that I cannot go home with him, and that I hope—I hope—that—Mrs. Hamilton will get along very well without me."

"Oh yes!" said the chambermaid to herself, "that hesitation means something else than 'Mrs. Hamilton,' I guess."

She gave Phœbe an opportunity to say this something else, by asking, "Anything else?"

Phœbe blushed again, and unconsciously hushed the child, which was quiet at that moment, but she replied:

"John understands me; still, you can tell him that I hope he won't mind walking home without me, and I am very sorry for it."

She wanted to send a more loving message than this, but could not, even by so kind a messenger. The girl, who was one of the most considerate of chambermaids, and really above her station in her understanding of John's forlorn condition in the basement, faithfully delivered the words of Phœbe's lips, and added to them, upon her own responsibility, the words of her heart:

"She sends her best love to you, besides, and wanted to come down and see you before you left, but couldn't, because the baby was asleep upon her lap, and she didn't dare to put her down for fear of waking her."

A hint is here thrown out to the world with regard to a new habit that might be formed from the example of Mrs. Benedict's chambermaid. This sending a visitor away with something warm for his heart might, by cultivation, be rendered quite as agreeable and strengthening as the hospitality which shows itself in sending a visitor away with something warm for his physical man.

Who will encourage the movement?

Mary's humble effort did a good deal for John, for he turned from Mrs. Benedict's door with a glowing feeling in his soul for the true-hearted girl who loved

him, and would make such a devoted wife for being such a devoted friend. He resolved to give her cause for the same devotion she was showing now to Mrs. Benedict, by a whole life of love and care!

He went back to Mrs. Hamilton and told her the reason of Phœbe's absence, and then went down town to his own room to read a little and to dream of Phœbe.

XVIII.

ıst, Paul, strong in body once more, and strong
the imagined strength of his own power to
nptation, went out into the streets of the great
ı renewed life and hope. His sickness had
e medicine to his diseased mind, and the little
ad given such help that the elevation and
s of the mental faculties seemed to bring new
the bodily powers. Pain had been banished
ery nerve and every thought; his blood coursed
all his veins with a warmth like latent fire;
ction for the true and good took its healthy
hrough the heart not made of flesh, and the
of this spiritual fire was better than the glow
h in his veins.

nsidered himself now a healthy man in body
ıl. He would show what man can do in
ggle with an evil spirit when it tempts to for-
ss of his duty to himself. He would not run
om the enemy, as he had done before, but he
ıce it bravely, trusting in his own right arm to
ıe it and put it beneath his feet!

s spirit walked Paul Hamilton to the office
e occasionally wrote articles for a friend who
l the new publications for a leading periodical;
bitterness flowed from his pen that day. Some

author blessed the geniality of Paul's soul, for no "sour critic" handled the work of his brain. And when he went to his restaurant to dine, the face of the sweet child at home came between him and the list of wines upon the bill of fare; her little hand beckoned him away from well-known saloons to which he was invited by convivial friends, and her light feet seemed dancing before him as he went on his way, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left for self-indulgence. He devotedly loved the child, and liked to fancy that her eyes pleaded with him when he met the adversary, and shone with triumph when he left it behind.

There was no Gordon by his side to sneer at all this, and day after day he went on happy and rejoicing, making short visits to his sick friend during the daylight, as he was not yet permitted to breathe the evening air, and returning at the promised hour to his own room, where he always found his darling little nurse.

Springing into his arms as Rose was accustomed to do, or nestling her soft hands in his if it were May who met him, the child created a home to which it was delightful to return after a busy day in the world.

He would take his seat upon the sofa, and with the child upon his knee, find so much enjoyment in the eager, childish talk, and in answering all the questions about what he had been doing during the day, that he would often beg Mrs. Morant to let his little companion remain with him beyond her usual bed-time. But this was never allowed. Mrs. Morant was strangely perverse upon this point of indulging Paul with the society of the child after a certain hour, no persuasion could affect the firmness of her law, and in conse-

ːe of her undeviating rule the time of his happi-
was quite too short to satisfy him.
e last kiss was given with regret, and the child's
would cling around his neck until the waiting
Morant would inquire, with decided emphasis,
you COMING, my dear?"
en the time had surely arrived for the last em-
, with the child's last words always something
:hese: "Now, dear uncle, I MUST go; but I
go to sleep thinking of you, and I shall dream
ıice dreams, I know, because you are down here
ıg, and writing a story to tell me to-morrow;
ıcky for you, uncle, that I am up stairs in my
bed, with my mouth closed, and my feet tucked
ıder the bed-clothes, so that I can't run about
alk to you, for then you couldn't write a word!
orrow, I want a story about a real, live baby
was found in the woods, and was found out
the little girl of a princess. I don't want her to
'airy, for I'm tired of fairies."
: shall be as you say," Paul would reply submis-
to the demand of the child; and with another
is little companion was gone.
was very pleasant, sitting reading and writing
this, in remembering that the child's dreams were
made happier by his presence so near her, and
ıe could prepare a pleasure for her while she slept.
e loving conspirators in the house and out of the
were working silently and steadily to bring Paul
lependence upon the home-influence of the chil-

But Mrs. Morant had been particularly in-
ed to understand that a treasure always remains
ısure while it is kept from constant possession;

and this well-known law was the secret of Mrs. Morant's system with the child at night.

Paul was not allowed to believe that the joy he coveted was a common joy, to be his for the asking. It was supposed to be a rare thing, and so was kept fresh for him by being denied him at times.

They were cunning and artful, these conspirators. Paul, never allowed to be weary of the children, always longed for them when they were taken away; and this desire was used to strengthen the cord which was drawing him home.

Alice, waiting so patiently, was careful that the work should be sure, for she feared her husband's weakness through the very strength he showed. He might be on the very brink of danger while he talked to the children of the good man he was going to be by the help of their innocent companionship.

The credulous little ones believed him, and repeated day after day all his words to their aunt Helen with childish delight. Their mother's tears would never flow again! And oh what a happy time they would have as they went home! what a party there would be up town, with Aunt Cornelia, Robert and Paul, Phœbe and John! They would dress their dolls up splendidly, and on this great occasion permit them to sit up all the evening, instead of putting them to bed at dark! It should be a "real treat" to them, Rose exclaimed.

They appeared to be particularly delighted one evening at some strong expression of their father's about his happiness and hope for the future; and when Rose repeated it to Helen, she clasped her arms about the neck of her aunt, and said, with her laughing face

wisdom as well as joy, "You think you know a deal, auntie, but May and I know you don't know ng! For you don't know, as we do now, that is REALLY coming home."

o one can know that REALLY," replied Helen, the cheek so near her own; "no one but God l this, my darling, although we hope that it will

e detached herself from the arms which held her, armured, as she allowed herself to be undressed e night, "Nobody but God and May and me o know anything about uncle's coming home. knew Aunt Helen so cross as to say that it isn't And she whispered to May, "You know, don't Of course May knew, and was as sure as Rose, e two smiled upon each other with their secret tanding of the happy event which was so soon place.

eling, afterward, in their white night-dresses, lded hands and drooping eyelids, the reverence words they were repeating could not triumph ie joyful expression of the young faces bent in

n, with a strange weight at her heart, looked he happy children for fear of the sorrow that come to them through the disappointment of opes. And yet she could not disturb such hap- by her own doubts. So, when May asked her, lay down to sleep, if she would not say that eally thought they would go home very soon," replied as cheerfully as she could:

iope and pray that we shall, my darlings, and e Lord will keep dear uncle so well in body and

mind, that when we ask him to come with us he will be all ready. Perhaps he is very nearly so now, but we must not be too sure, for we may be disappointed, and that would be very hard to bear."

The caution fell without effect upon one ear at least, for after Helen had given her last tender kiss and had left the chamber, Rose turned to May, and putting her hand in that of her sister, as she always did before going to sleep, she said, very decidedly, although her voice was sleepy in its tone,

"Aunty is very pretty; prettier than you or I, and she talks very nice, but I don't think she knows very much—I wish she knew more!"

The more just and quiet little girl replied, "Auntie knows ever and ever so much; a great deal more than we do, Rose."

But the little rebel's last words were, as she went off to her innocent dreams, "Perhaps she does—I don't care—dear uncle is coming home, and all that Aunt Helen says won't alter it a bit!"

The children's confidence had some effect in brightening Helen's hope, although she was scarcely conscious of it. Her natural love tempted her to trust in Paul's word, but her spiritual knowledge told her that the strength of a man who trusts alone to himself is the strength of a branch which is cut off from its vine; it may look green and healthy for a season, but time will show that it has no life.

Was it so with Paul, that he might live in apparent health for a season, and then come near death in forgetting the beautiful correspondence of transmitted life —"I am the vine, ye are the branches?"

The very next evening came the answer to her ques-

on; the shadow of grief had fallen upon her, even hen the children had been so sure of going home.

Long after the appointed time for Paul's return from s business the child waited in his room for the niliar step; no anxious wife or sister could have tched more faithfully; but hour after hour passed ay and he did not come. The bed-time was forgot- ; there was no thought about rules or plot in those nbling hearts—only fear for the cause of this first ence.

Had the mission failed? Had those precious little s been forgotten, or put aside for any other love less e and saving? Twins in a holy purpose, as in their h, had they worked so faithfully together for their ier only to be disappointed at last?

Oh no! Oh no! It could not be!" Helen ex- med, as she walked the room up stairs, with May her chamber door and Rose below; "some busi- s must have detained him; he was writing, perhaps, his friend's office, some paper of particular import- ce; perhaps he is ill." Anything was better to len than the suspicion that he had forgotten the dren, and had yielded to temptation again.

At that moment Rose came running up stairs to say t she remembered uncle said to her that morning iething about "going to see a poor sick friend, and nding a whole evening with him, because he asked i to, and perhaps he had gone now—I'm sure he !" And with her usual lightness of spirit she was ermined to think that all was right; then she ran vn stairs again, to be at her post if Paul should ie, murmuring to herself, "Auntie looked as if she er expected to see dear uncle again; how foolish,

isn't it, when we know now that he has only gone for a little visit, and may be back before we go to bed!"

The child tried to comfort herself by this imaginary conversation with her hope, but for a long time afterward the head of Rose lay upon the window-sill of her father's parlor, the long, heavy curls stirred by the summer wind, while her anxious eyes were fastened upon the corner of the street where he would first come in sight.

It grew so late at last that Helen sent for her to go to bed, and tears for the first time of her watching streamed down her cheeks. She begged for just half an hour more, for uncle was sure to come by that time. "I KNOW he will," as was her usual plea for everything which she desired to have come to pass.

The call was, however, too peremptory to be disobeyed or postponed, and so Rose went up to Helen and May with a hesitating step, murmuring, "Aunt Helen is cross again to-night! I do believe mamma would let me wait." She walked into the chamber with this expression struggling with her grief, but Helen took no notice of it, and talked as cheerfully as she was able to do while the children undressed.

They were tired little beings now, full of childish fretfulness. Something had gone wrong with them, and, charming as they usually were, they now proved themselves to be imperfect children of earth, subject to caprices, rebellion and tears. They both sobbed in sympathy while their night-dresses were put on; and Rose at last cried aloud as she knelt at Helen's knee. May alone succeeded in saying the prayer, and as they rose from their knees, May alone gave Helen the usual

kiss. From the beginning of the preparation for bed to the last "good-night" there had been nothing but discomfort for the aunt and willfulness from the little ones; not a word of merry talk, not one ringing laugh, as was usual in the children's nursery.

Was it possible that anything the father was doing could act upon the pure young spirits that had been brought so close to him? Could their innocent states be disturbed by the evil or weakness of their father's heart?

Having kept down her own disturbed feelings for the sake of some kind of peace with the children, Helen kissed them both and left them with a smile, although they had tried her sorely; there was no very loving return for this; but no sooner had she closed the door than May's voice called out passionately to her, and going back directly, the sensitive child rose up in bed, and throwing her arms about Helen's neck, exclaimed, with sobs between each word,

"I have been very naughty to-night, dear auntie, and I am so sorry; say that you will love me, dear auntie, very, very much, so that I can be happy and go to sleep. I promise to be a good girl to-morrow if you will love me again!"

Helen told her, soothingly, that she had never ceased to love her; that the good Father above and friends on the earth never lost their love for little children when they did wrong, but it was the children who lost for the time of their naughtiness their love for those who were trying to have them good.

"I know that is true, dear auntie, for I didn't love you when I was teasing you so, and I'm sure that you loved me. Oh I was such a naughty girl! Please

don't write to mamma, because I am so, so sorry." And the child's tears flowed afresh at the remembrance of her mother.

Rose then caught the repentant spirit, and drawing Helen down to her as she bent over the bed, she kissed her again and again, with her usual fervor of doing things; and her tears having dried, she said in a very bright way, "I do believe, auntie, that the angels all went away to-night, we were so cross. I was the naughtiest to think that you were cross! I believe that they are coming back now, for I feel just like being good, as May does; and don't you think they will come and stop if I am really glad they have come?"

"Yes, my dear, I am sure of it. I am so happy that you did not go to sleep with the bad feelings you had to-night. You will both be good to-morrow, I know, for the angels which you have called back will stay with you while you sleep, and make you stronger to keep your promises. Now, good-night again, my darlings, and pleasant dreams."

The responsive "good-night, dear auntie," of the children was repeated again and again in their happiest tones, and Helen, going out, left peace and sunshine behind her, while a shadow still lingered on her own spirit. She sat down to write to Alice, as usual; and as she had promised faithfully to give her own daily thoughts about Paul to the anxious wife, she kept her promise now, and found relief to her overburdened mind. Every morning John took to Alice the note which told of the previous day's work and its success; and so she was kept in constant communication with the dear ones down town.

Until now Helen had been full of hope, and her labor of love had been delightful to her. To-night she was worn out with the children's fretfulness and her own emotions. She listened to every sound while she wrote, and at last wound up her evening story with the words:

"Oh, my dear Alice, I am sorry to grieve you, but my heart must be relieved, and I have promised to be faithful to you in my confidence; my thoughts are painfully on the stretch to know how Paul will come home to-night! I have prayed, and I have relieved myself by tears, and yet the noise of a closing door makes me start, and every footstep seems ominous of trouble.

"The children are asleep hand in hand, and I sit here alone, trying to hope. And even if Paul should have fallen again, shall we not hope on? Again comes that heavy answer of my heart, 'How long! how long!'

"Forgive me, dearest Alice, for being such a miserable comforter to you when you are patiently waiting for good news. I am creating doubts when I should paint rainbows in the cloud. I believe I am sick in body, and so troublesome spirits have gained access to me to fill me with their own evil thoughts! If John comes in early, I will try what a walk will do toward casting them off."

Helen's walk did not restore her mind or body, for her anxiety to return and watch for Paul was more powerful than the influences of the air and exercise. She took her station at the door of her chamber and sat there late into the night; and then!—and then! The sound of carriage wheels broke the silence of the

streets; they stopped before the door; and then an uncertain fumbling of a key in the lock. Rising from her chair and looking over the stairs from above, Helen saw two men coming in, the one leading the other—the one was the driver of the carriage, and the other was Paul! The compassionate hackman had left his faithful, steady horses to themselves, while he took care of that unfaithful, besotted man.

Stepping quietly down a few stairs, that she might watch if Paul should need any further care, Helen saw the driver help him carefully into his chamber, remove his coat and hat, and lay him with some difficulty upon his bed. Then he returned as noiselessly as he could to his carriage and drove away, pitying, no doubt, the wife, the mother, or the sister who might love that helpless man better than her own life.

Helen lingered until she had evidence from Paul's chamber that he had dropped into the heavy slumber that follows—how can we write the word in connection with the intelligent and refined Paul Hamilton!—and then she went back to her own room, to weep and to pray afresh.

She prayed, that after this dreadful darkness morning might come to Paul; and a great cry of grief broke from her as she thought of the two childish hearts that would be almost broken by the truth which must be told them. She became at last exhausted by her emotions, and preparing herself for rest, she found it in sleep, from very weariness of body and mind.

Looking into Gordon's chamber, we find the cause of all this sorrow. The atmosphere is tainted with the perfume of cigars and wine; and Gordon, after Paul's departure, lay in his bed, laughing triumphantly at the

fall of his friend. Although he had taken care to drink but little himself, yet he had drunk enough to make his brain active and his nerves full of fire.

He could not sleep in the early part of the night; but while he kept awake he amused himself with a review of the cunning and fascination he had used to tempt Paul: leading him on by degrees to forget that "angelic child," who, Gordon swore with a terrible oath, should not baffle him. He muttered aloud, "A white-faced baby trying to lead Paul Hamilton into virtuous by-ways full of Methodist songs, and what they call 'immortal flowers,' when I have determined, as a bearded man, to make him go another way, which 'leadeth to destruction!'" Then turning painfully in his bed, he mingled with his impatient exclamations at his sufferings a last anathema at the child: "Oh you may work, weak little angel, butter-mouthed and dove-eyed though you may be; I should laugh, if he who is called Dudley Gordon, with his wit and knowledge of mankind, could not win the miserable prize we are both struggling for. Win him I will! So good-night, little angel, and a happy awakening to-morrow, when you will learn your weakness and my power. Your dear friend will be thirsty; but this will be no sign of fever, only of a phase in social life. Take him a cup of coffee; it will be grateful to him, I am sure; but he will be thirsty again, my dear, if I can make him so!"

With these thoughts Gordon fell at last into an unquiet sleep. Gordon, Paul, Alice, Helen and the children all sleeping, and yet how different the life within! What deformity and what beauty beneath those manly and those graceful forms! There was fine proportion, and strength, and loveliness in those recumbent figures,

and yet the angels who watch man's soul at nigh
evil may not harm it in an unconscious state, s
the internal disproportion of those who were
wrong, and all the inward grace of those who v
the right, as no mortal eyes could see. To such
ual eyes the beautiful body cannot hide the def
soul, nor the deformed body the beautiful soul, a
man; and so Gordon, Paul, Alice, Helen and th
dren slept in the presence of the angels, all uncor
that in this sleep they revealed the very form o
souls, hidden by cunning or humility, in their da
before the world.

XIX.

THE next morning it was told the children that their work had been interrupted—that they must ave patience and hope again. We will not describe eir grief at hearing the story of their father's return e night before. For a time their childish despair as as full as their childish certainty had been. Their ork seemed endless now, and it was not until Helen ad carefully shown them how much depended upon eir affectionate zeal for the good of their father and r the happiness of their mother, that they were rought into a state to receive fresh instructions as to ie course they should pursue.

May was the first to be quieted, and, again filled ith a desire to do all she could for her precious nother, she was prepared by Helen to try what a visit) her father would do for him.

It was late before the listening child heard any sound ı Paul's chamber. Then gently knocking, she was nswered, after a long silence, with the familiar "Come ı." May's hand trembled a little as she opened the oor, but she went bravely forward, and, shutting the oor behind her, went to her father's bed. Paul had wakened in the night, and finding himself but half ndressed, had taken off his boots and crept under the overlet in haste, to seek forgetfulness of the morti-

fying story this condition brought fresh to his mind. And he slept well and late, to the relief of his memory. But the awakening in the full light of the morning was terrible. He had no courage to rise, and so he lay there casting over in his mind all the particulars of his evening with Gordon, and coming to the conclusion that he had not only been weak in himself, but had been ill used by his friend. He dreaded, and yet longed for the innocent child who seemed his better angel, and so, when she approached the bed after his permission to come in, the flush of shame, mingled with pleasure, spread over his face.

May kissed him and said not a word. She took the hand that was held out to her in a caressing way, and as it did not draw her to him as usual, she drew it around her waist herself with a loving smile, saying,

"Uncle is sick again, I know, because he is so long in bed; now, I am going to be his nurse, as I used to be, and fix his pillows and sing to him. Will that be nice?"

Nothing but the remembrance of her aunt Helen's tearful earnestness, as she had told her how much depended upon her brightness and cheerfulness with her father, prevented May from throwing herself upon his bosom, and crying with all her little heart when she saw the look in Paul's eyes as she spoke. Self-reproach, sorrow, repentance were all in the eyes that rested on the child's face. It was a long, hungry look, too, as if to find there forgiveness and help.

She felt the sob coming up from her heart, and she must not cry! It would tell all that she was not to tell of last night's watching, of loving spies upon his movements, of her own knowledge of his fall. She

suddenly withdrew from the arm about her, and, bravely forcing back the tears which were coming, she began to arrange some pamphlets scattered about the table, and then opened his window wide, that "uncle might get some fresh air to do him good."

This she had often done before in playful effort to be of use, and it did not seem forced now, as Paul watched her at her work. He suspected that the child was feeling more than she would show, and thought that Mrs. Morant, perhaps, had heard him coming in the night before, and had some knowledge of his state. If the child had been told anything of this, and was by her feigned ignorance giving him a tender proof of her consideration, the little figure flitting around the room bore more reproach with it than the most eloquent sermon upon his degradation.

So the little heroine was rewarded by the new gratitude of the man, made a child before her. For the first time in his life the child-like thought came to him, "I was so strong, and proud in my strength, when I talked with little May about the good man I was resolved to be, and I have fallen! Oh where shall I go for help?" Unconsciously he repeated the last words aloud, "Oh where shall I go for help?" while he covered his face with his hands to hide the tears that came into them in spite of his manly pride.

Did not the child's angels catch the beseeching tone, and whisper to her, "Go to him, for he is becoming as one of us?" for the innocent voice asked soon after, "Shall I sing to you, dear uncle?" and springing upon the bed, she placed her hand caressingly upon those of Paul, while she sang one of her mother's favorite chants, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy

laden, and I will give you rest." Many a time had the mother and children chanted those words to the accompaniment of their little organ at home, at twilight and on Sabbath afternoons; and Paul was always in the mind of his wife as she played and sang. Now the child was singing it to the "weary-laden" Alice loved so well! Would he be helped to "rest" by that face, and hand, and voice? Oh very sweet, and gentle, and winning they were to the sick man. All the pride and strength of his heart became captive to the mysterious influence and devotion of the lovely child before him. He gathered her into his arms, he laid her head upon his breast, and in the light of those clear eyes, through which heaven seemed to look upon him, he bowed himself in prayer: "I have sinned in trusting my own strength; Lord, save me, or I perish!"

"And a little child did lead them."

Yes, pride and strength were in the hand of the little child, and now she could lead them to become the pride and strength of the real man. The prayer to another Power higher than himself was the first blush of morning to his new day. Here was the beginning of the man. The world may laugh and scoff, as Gordon did, at such a manliness as this; but in another life all will confess that the stature of a man is of his growth in goodness and truth, and not of anything that pertains to earth.

How holy and delightful is this truth to angels, and how tame to man! Is the man superior in his wisdom to the angels?

May rested on her father's bosom altogether unconscious of the "rest" that was flowing into it from the words of her chant. She noticed her father's agitation,

and wondered at the expression of his eyes, which changed from time to time beyond her understanding. But when he once more pressed her to his heart, kissed her, and exclaimed "My darling, my darling! God bless you, my darling, for those comforting words; you have brought the very sunshine of Heaven upon me!" she knew then that joy, and not sorrow, was to come from the changes in her father's face.

She nestled closer to him, and her whisper, "Dear uncle, I am very glad!" was musical with the love of her mother, as well of himself; for she imagined something of the effect which this might have upon their "going home." They were always watching and hoping, she knew—mother and Aunt Helen—and perhaps this would be good news to take them when she could get away from those loving arms, as she meant to very soon.

She must run and tell Aunt Helen; she could not wait; the certainty grew strong that she had something of wonderful importance to relate, and suddenly disengaging one of Paul's arms from about her, she pleaded to be let down from the bed, for "she must really go now, and uncle must get up."

Paul came back, as it were, from heaven to earth, as the little May slid from his warm embrace, and reminded him by her words of his lingering in bed and the cause of his half undress.

The sunshine seemed to have gone out of his room and all the warmth from his heart as May bounded to the floor, and throwing a kiss, disappeared from his sight. The door shutting behind her startled Paul painfully; he seemed left alone to wrestle with evil; his good angel had withdrawn herself, perhaps, to let him

know how dependent he was upon the influences of Heaven. He was weak and nervous from his last evening's entertainment with Gordon.

Entertainment! Drinking and smoking until the air is poisoned for the lungs, and the delicate organization of the brain disordered. This is called "entertainment" by men made in the image and likeness of God! It is well, when this transient exhilaration of the head is followed by the travail of the heart which brings forth genuine repentance for the tears of wife and mother.

In the case of Paul it was to follow, that he became fully convinced that in himself he was very weak, but if Heaven were within him he could be very strong. And so while Helen was kneeling in her room above, offering up her prayer that a full harvest might come from the seed sown that day in the soul of Paul, he was softening more and more under the memory of that earnest call, made tender, so very tender, through the voice of his child: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And while Helen pleaded for wisdom to guide the children in the best possible way, and for power to come with the children's presence when with their father, Paul was registering a vow that, with the Divine Help, *without which he could do nothing* (Alice's very rule of life!), he would never again yield to the tempter, but would prepare himself by fasting and prayer to return to his wife and children. As soon as his new strength should be confirmed in him, as soon as he felt another life than his own coursing through his veins, bringing the health of a true man, he would stand before his Alice, and offer

her an affection which should be a better mate with her sweet soul than the youthful passion he had called love. She should be happier in this new bridal, with one who would forget himself in her, than she had fancied herself in the first days of her union with one who forgot her in himself.

Oh miserable selfishness, with its sorrowful consequences, long years of solitary wretchedness instead of the peace and joy of home! He would cast behind him for ever the cup whose dregs were tears, and drink again the wine which nourishes the soul of man. He had drunk deep of self-indulgence; now he was going to accept from the hand of God the meat and drink which had brought to Alice the proportions of spiritual beauty he had admired so much. He had found to his cost the difference between that meat and drink which perisheth, and that which bringeth eternal life!

With noble humility he prayed that he might pass through every fiery trial before him, without his garments showing the scorch of the furnace or his body the marks of the beast; then would he be worthy to stand before his Alice and kiss his children.

With this holy joy at his heart and pleasant prospect before his eyes, Paul arose and dressed himself with peculiar care, as if from new respect for himself, and then rang his bell for Mrs. Morant.

She was all ready to answer it, so intense was her interest in everything which concerned the success or failure of the little conspirators. Was she to see any signs of their work for good, now that she was summoned to Paul's room?

With no definite idea of Paul's condition, she was surprised when she opened his door to see him so well

dressed, and with no flush of shame upon his face, as might well become a man who had been assisted to bed by a stranger the night before; but she was more astonished when, after the most minute directions about the airing of his room, he said, with heartfelt emphasis, "God willing, Mrs. Morant, last night was the end of my wanderings!"

Paul held out his hand to his humble friend as he spoke, and she, clasping it in those rough, warm palms, bent and kissed it, baptizing it with a tear for the wife's and children's sake. A sob and a choke broke up the words she tried to utter about her happiness in his good resolutions, and turning to leave the room in order to hide her emotion, Paul requested her to send his little playmate to the parlor directly, where he would meet her.

Mrs. Morant was not loth to hasten with her message to Helen, and with all sorts of caution and advice, well understood by the child, and with a last kiss containing a blessing and a prayer, May was sent to her father.

The parlor door was not closed, and as May entered, Paul opened his arms to her as he stood in the middle of the room in waiting for her. Then the gentle child became almost as demonstrative as Rose, for she bounded into the extended arms with a little cry of joy, and answered back with her kisses the passionate embrace and the passionate words, "Will you be my guardian angel, my little one, my pet, my darling, and never, never leave me to myself?"

He bore her to the sofa, and there pressing the child to his bosom, as if for fear of losing the innocence she brought with her, Paul gazed into the pure eyes so full

of the loving affinity with himself, as if to catch a glimpse of the heaven he was resolved to seek.

Then they talked together as they had never talked before—May with the wisdom of her childhood, and Paul with the wisdom of the childhood just born within him. It was no sudden transformation of the man, but the effect of causes operating all along in opposition to Gordon's evil influence. The work had been going on for years, very quietly and without observation, in the secret places wherein the natural eye of man cannot penetrate; the good angels of Paul's better nature had been all this time lovingly at work in patience, and the child, so near to them, had been the visible messenger to reap the harvest of the seed sown by heavenly hands.

Paul blessed the child, and the angels smiled and rejoiced. Paul held the little, soft hand in his, and said to May, "This will lead me into all the ways of goodness and peace;" and he told her that her voice in chanting the words "Come unto me," had aroused in him for the first time an earnest desire to seek for strength where alone it could be found; and the angels saw their crown placed upon the little head without coveting it, so glad were they at the consummation of their desires.

May, nestling close in his bosom, heard her father say at last, "Oh that you could be my own dear child, whose reward for all that you have done for me in your innocent love would be to share the joy I mean to bring some dear ones I have never seen, across the sea. If money could buy you, darling, I would give a good share of my possessions to take you home with me and keep you all my life!"

May heard this as she lay close to her father's heart, and she trembled and sobbed there so excitedly that Paul became alarmed, and blamed himself for having overwrought the child's sensitive nature by his own excitement and caresses. He soothed her so tenderly that she became, with childlike changefulness, at once calm and happy. Her beautiful eyes were filled with such delight at the thought of her mother's happiness that the light in them made the tears sparkle as dew, and clasping her arms about her father's neck, she wished that she might never leave him any more; "she loved him so much, so very much!"

All that day Paul rested quietly, and gained strength every hour from his own resolutions and the companionship of Rose or May. The foundation being laid upon a rock, the superstructure of life grew with every thought of good. The child's voice was sweeter music to him than ever, with the harmony stealing into his inner being; and the evening came without changing the sunlight of his almost childlike joy. His work was only just begun, in fact, and yet the dawn of day seemed to him, with its golden light and song of birds, like the fullness of noon.

That night the child knelt down for the first time at her father's knee and said her evening prayer at his request. And although it seemed very strange to Paul to have the little one bending before him, bringing the "angels who do always behold the face of their Father" so near to him in her devotions, yet he felt that it was very pleasant and very good for him; and he told her, as she rose from her knees for the good-night kiss, which was given and received with such a new delight; "You must always say your prayer to me before you go

d, for I like to hear you very much, and I am sure I shall be better for it."

And I like to say it here so much," answered May, e stood by his side fondling his hand, as she had red the habit of doing when she was near him; all always remember it, because I want to. You he Lord's prayer, dear uncle, don't you?"

Keep me from temptation and deliver me from " replied Paul, reverentially. "Yes, my darling, words I like very much indeed, and need to re- hem often. And now, one sweet kiss more, and int dreams to my true little friend."

erward, when the house was quiet, and Paul in edroom reviewed the experience of the night :, and the pleasant day just passed, he too, before ig, made an effort to bend the knee before the high God as the child had done before her ier in heaven;" and although at the first attempt iused muscles of humility brought a glow to his which might have been shame had it been seen y looker-on, yet Paul resolved as he closed his n sleep, that his manliness should not be like that : rebelling Lucifer, through which he lost heaven, iould be like that of the four-and-twenty elders ' cast their crowns before the throne," in grateful owledgment that the strength and virtue of their ood were of the Lord alone.

at night, Paul slept nearer to the heart of his than even in the first happy hours of his wedded or he was nearer the Lord in whose presence she

That night, the children sang with joy even in dreams, "Dear uncle is coming home!" That Helen wrote to Alice a few brief words, and

sent them by the willing John after his evening's visit to Phœbe, for it was not too late for the messenger of such good tidings, and the words were after this comforting fashion:

"Sleep well to-night, dear Alice! Paul is yours and Heaven's. The children are smiling in their dreams, and I am too glad to lie down and lose the beautiful stars of this summer night, which seem like heavenly eyes reflecting my happiness."

That night, the wife and mother forgot her tedious widowhood, and while the sorrowful throughout the city kept awake over their grief in living when the world was so dark and sad, Alice slept, and dreamed of a home made happy by the presence of its upright master, made beautiful by the faces of children, and consecrated with the highest joy to herself by her husband's prayer, "Of myself I can do nothing; help me O Lord!"

XX.

ROBERT BENEDICT had become a business man; it was a great change from the careless, erry Robert Benedict of Cornelia Hamilton's engage- ent days. And the change was owing to the gradual velopment of the manly character, without the con- olling influence of a very holy aim. As he advanced years, he made himself entertaining in society by e brilliant conversation which remained as the sign former lightness of heart; but in his family he kept mself within himself, and gave no evidence of any gher aspiration than to find success as a merchant road, and amusement with his children at home.

With his wife, the gayety that had been prominent in s character as the lover and young husband, had ven place to the profound thoughtfulness that leaves e wife to her duties and her affection, unaided by ords of sympathy. He neglected all the little atten- ns that keep the life of husband and wife so fresh, d indulged in selfish thoughts of his own affairs, eping close from Cornelia the reasons of his occa- nal moroseness, his looks of care, his fits of nervous patience; in fine, the knowledge which would have ade her sympathize with all the ills which business en are born to, and would have given her light in her rkness.

Anything but darkness to the woman who loves her husband! Let there be thunder and lightning, but never the heavy black cloud without the flash and the growl! For there is a hope in the purifying commotion of the one, but none in the dead calm of the other.

Robert Benedict might have fancied himself very kind, as many another man has done, when he came home with a smileless face, and would not share his trouble with his wife for fear of adding to her cares. So mistaken is the husband in the wife! As if there were no added care in the secret discomfiture of her husband's mind; as if it would not be relieved by confidence! If the husband sits and broods, the wife will learn to sit and brood, and then they go apart as surely as two must, who never come together and talk consolingly of mutual interests.

Robert and Cornelia had not yet lost each other in such a distance as this; although, if this uneven tenor of their ways should continue long, it might result in the internal separation of two who had been made one, which is so common in wedded life, from carelessness of the one great bond of union—confidence.

No. Robert loved his wife. Deep within his soul dwelt the sweet Christian who blessed his home. Narrowing around her, to be sure, seemed the outer walls of "stock" and "company" boards, but there was an inmost place for her yet; she was as a warm, bright presence within his selfishness, which, all unconsciously, took away something of the chill of worldliness. Through the secret influences of his wife's true and patient life, Robert was every day held from becoming more of earth and less of heaven. With his

eyes silent and his mouth dumb,—dropping all sentiment and poetry, all the eulogiums of love,—he was still a lover for this one bright spot in his soul; and it came to pass that a mutual sorrow brought it all to light.

It often happens that this same love is brought to light when it is too late to make amends for thoughtless or premeditated coldness. When the loving eyes are closed in their last sleep on earth—when the ready hands are folded quietly upon the breast—when the permeating spirit of the domestic world has gone forth in a still lovelier form to works of heavenly use—then such a husband as Robert Benedict acknowledges, with grief, that although the wife whom he has lost made no talk of what she was to him, even as the sun has no voice for its daily influence upon the world, yet she was the quiet joy of his home, making glad the morning with her smile, and sanctifying the evening with her prayer. Death has revealed the tender bond between his life and hers. It was beside the crib of his dying child, just three months old, that Robert began to know something of this secret bond; which knowledge led him afterward to become the true and tender husband of his wife. In the approach of the Angel of Death he caught the true meaning of life. The world was of very little importance to him now, as he watched the bloom fading away from his darling's cheek and the roundness from her limbs, the beauty and grace of the little body changing, as the true beauty and grace within unfolded its wings for flight. Sickness and health! Death and life! In a little while that child would know about a world of which philosophers had merely dreamed; and at every start

and uneven breath the father feared that the angel had already come to take his little one to her heavenly home.

It was beside his baby's crib that Robert found how much more effectual Cornelia's work had been than his preparation for just such an hour as this—how much comfort and strength she had when he was so weak. He had gone out into the world without a word of help for all her inward wants, and so she had gone more interiorly to the best Source of help, and had found her reward in standing there strong in spirit to receive the angel who might soon be sent for the little one she loved.

While the husband and wife were thus watching and sometimes hoping by the crib of their youngest child, the eldest was lying sick with the same disorder, and so their hands and hearts were burdened with care and sorrow.

The great city rested itself at night and labored during the day, while Cornelia, Robert and Phœbe watched the life flickering in the eyes of the dying child, and Alice took the charge of the sick boy in another room. There were other darkened chambers in the city where watchers of earth and watchers of heaven were with the sick and dying—watchers on each side of the grave; but how different the view! That which is of death and sorrow to the mourners on earth is of life and welcome to the heavenly ones who see the Resurrection.

With the three watchers by the baby's bedside the celestial angels shared the nights and days until the weary little head lay calm upon its pillow and the blue eyes closed for ever over all the trouble in them. Then

through the glorious sunshine of their own home the angels bore the new-born cherub to the Father's bosom; and the child smiled like the angels in the presence of Infinite Love.

The quiet face upon the pillow reflected the smile to those left behind, and it was beautiful to them and comforting. Cornelia understood the heavenly message it brought to her, from the child of her love.

"Mamma, I am so well now, and happy;" and, although her tears fell fast as she kissed her baby's cheek, and her warm lips felt the coldness there, she went to her own room with a child-like heart, and falling upon her knees, exclaimed, "Thy will be done!"

Thus, like her own little child she found peace in the presence of Infinite Love.

She went back to the nursery, where Robert sat almost stupefied with sorrow, and putting her arms around him she whispered tenderly:

"Robert, dear Robert, let us live in the memory of the baby's smile before us, which speaks so plainly of heaven, and not in the memory of our own loss, which belongs to earth. O Robert, do not be so distressed when there is the sweetest peace to be found in going to the Lord. Should we not look together toward the source of all our help? And will you not come with me, and in our marriage-chamber unite in acknowledging that the Lord is good?"

Robert answered not a word. His little girl was lying there dead—his pretty little girl, who had wound herself around his heart, young as she was, and she would have loved him in return with all her heart if she had lived. He should never hear "Dear, dear

papa" from the lips of his baby-girl. He had so longed for a little daughter, and after the treasure had been given, it had been taken away so soon! Where was the great mercy and the love?

All this was in Robert's heart, and Cornelia knew it by the gloom and silence of his grief. His wife could not move him to a single look or expression of sympathy for her own need of his affectionate support in this hour of trial. Selfish in his loss, as he had been in his life, Cornelia turned again by herself to a higher Help; and leaving him with his head resting upon his hand, she arranged some flowers, which kind friends had sent to her, about the little body, and then went up stairs to her boy's room, where Alice had established herself as nurse. There she found a sister who could answer back all the emotions of her soul. They talked together of the heaven to which the baby had gone; and the natural affection of the mother, although it felt the wound it had received, was put beneath the spiritual love which rejoiced at her child's safety and eternal happiness.

So, afterward, when the baby's hands were clasped around their coffin-flowers, the mother could put aside the veil of mortal sorrow and see two living hands plucking of that heavenly abundance of bud and blossom which never fails when innocence is near.

Robert clung to the earth to the last. And when the body of his child was put away from his sight for ever, he turned away from the grave with his eyes held by his own rebellion from seeing the body so full of angelic beauty which the Father's ministers of love had borne away, and were nourishing with tender care.

But the effect of this was very different from Corne-

lia's anticipation. Robert never ceased to mourn for his child, but a terrible fear came upon him that his wife might be taken away from him as suddenly as his little girl had been. This fear haunted him night and day; weakened by his grief for the one, he was not strong enough to throw off his fear for the other. He seemed to have awakened painfully to the real value of a treasure upon which he had no hold. Oh, if he had felt such sorrow for the loss of a little being who had been with him for so short a time, what would be his despair if Cornelia should be taken from him, upon whose presence he had depended from the hour he had loved and been beloved!

The husband's secret worship, which had been without a sign, now came forth; and in the fear of death, which, for the first time had come near to him, Robert's love gave such evidence of life that he was astonished and ashamed at his former want of tenderness, and devoted himself to make amends. Thus he renewed his vows to his wife over the grave of the child named after her; and he let no day pass over her head without the blessing of his sympathy in her duties and thoughts—for any hour she might die!

Thus softened, Robert grew to see many things in heaven and earth to which he had been blind before. And this is what one of the watchers in the sick-chamber gained by the visitation of the angel called "Death."

The following extract from Cornelia's journal will show the gain of another watcher, of which something has been already seen:

"*August* 5: My mother and one child in heaven. Robert and my two boys on earth. Treasures gath-

ered up in safety, and treasures to be watched over carefully until they too are gathered. Drawn to heaven and drawn to earth, may I be strengthened to keep a hold on both, and thus find joy for the eyes of the spirit and of the body

"May not my precious mother be the guardian of my little one? Perhaps she leads its tender feet with the same maternal love that she felt for the mother when upon the earth, only more exalted and refined; and teaches it in wisdom, free from the too-indulgent desires which often endanger the influence of earthly love. It gives me the sweetest consolation to think that it may be so; and there is no voice whispering to me that this is not the truth. It dries all the natural tears that will flow when I see the tiny shoe or the cambric robe which she has worn and will never wear again. It heals the aching pain of the heart, when the yearning comes to it for one more sight of the blue eyes that have looked up to me from my breast, one more kiss of the rosy mouth.

"Each time that I go up cheerfully to the Mount of the Invisible, I see my mother and my child surrounded by the beauty, the peace, and the joy of the spiritual world; and when I come down to my duties, I am happy there.

"Blessed be the Father for this heaven within us, where we can meet Him if we will, and bring back something of love and truth to warm and enlighten the earth!

"With this warmth and light the bereaved is led away from cold and darkness, and can say from the heart, 'It is well.'

"Some sympathizing friends of mine have said to

others, 'What a mystery it is that Mrs. Benedict should have been so ill at the birth of her child—that it should have proved a girl, which they both desired so much—and then, that it should have died just as it was beginning to be a comfort to her!'

"I am very grateful for the sympathy; but to call that a mystery which even my eyes can see to be such an everlasting blessing to me, through my child!

"What was the suffering of the mother, and her bereavement, compared to the gain of having given an angel to the family of Heaven? Can any true mother say that it is injustice, cruelty—that she should have suffered so much for so short a joy and so long a sorrow, when she has been the instrument of bringing everlasting happiness to an immortal soul?

"Immeasurable is the return for mortal suffering! I thank Thee, God of Love, that through thy lovely minister on earth, Paul's wife, I have been taught this; and that when I ascend Thy holy mountain to which she has directed my steps, I can behold from my elevated state another child resting in Thy bosom, another lamb added to Thy fold in answer to my prayer for my baby-girl. Oh help me in the valley when I come down from Thee!"

And this is what the mother gained by the visitation of the angel called "Death."

What did Phœbe say while her affectionate heart was sorely tried by the sorrow of her friends? She had returned home after the baby's death to resume her duties as housekeeper, while Alice remained with Cornelia until young Robert was strong enough to walk out; and this was the letter that Phœbe wrote to Mrs. Hamilton, asking, as usual, for light:

"My Dear Mrs. Hamilton: John and I have talked considerably over the trouble that dear Mrs. Benedict has suffered. John wonders why such a sweet, good woman should be obliged to have her heart almost broken by the loss of her darling baby; and he seems to think that good people are often very hardly dealt with in this world.

"When he talks so, I tell him I feel very sorry that he will not believe all things are for the best when they don't look so; and I really try to feel what I say. But when I am alone with my thoughts, I find the very same idea will keep coming up: I know every word was true that I said to John, and yet a voice keeps asking, 'Why did God think it best to take away such a good mother's little treasure?'

"I never knew Mrs. Benedict do anything really wrong in all my life. I know that I ought not to believe she is perfection, for I have heard you say that there isn't any such thing in the world; but I should be perfectly contented with myself, and pretty sure of going to heaven, if I were as near to it as she has always been.

"I can't think, then, why God took the baby from her. Christians say that trouble comes to soften the heart and make it better; but it is truer to me than to anybody else in the world, because no one knows her as well as I do, that Mrs. Benedict's heart was always as soft and tender as any angel's.

"They say, too, that sorrow leads the eyes to look up to heaven more, so that the Lord's face may become more familiar than even those you love on earth; but I, who have known her since the time she was her mother's darling at home, am sure that her

beautiful eyes had always more of heaven than earth in them, because they were looking so earnestly at the goodness above.

"I don't mean to be so wicked as to doubt God's love for any one so sweet and patient as Mrs. Benedict, but I am thinking if everything is true about the necessity of having the baby taken for her good, how much I shall have to suffer to make me ready for the other life—I who have had everything done for me to make me happy, and have done so very little to repay the kindness. How many friends I shall have to lose; how many other sorrows I shall have to bear to make me fit to go with Mrs. Benedict to heaven! I am so sad to think of it, and I ask myself if I can bear all I need. Then I think of Mrs. Benedict's smile through her tears, when she said to you, 'It is well with the child,' and I hope that I shall be helped, as she must have been then.

"Isn't it hypocrisy for me not to let John say that he doesn't see why people have to suffer so much before they die, when just this thought has passed through my own mind ever so many times? Dear Mrs. Hamilton, I believe I have got to shed a good many tears to wash my wicked ideas away. Oh, how I wish I could be perfect without losing any one I love.

"I know, just as well as you can tell me, that all the wrong is in me when I doubt the goodness of God's providence in making my dear benefactor's heart sad; but you were never an orphan girl, all alone in the wide world, finding, in her greatest hour of need, first the mother's and then the daughter's gentle hand, leading you to happiness!

"The mother is in heaven, and the daughter, it seems to me, is very near heaven. If I am not right in thinking so, I hope that I shall understand, one of these days, all that is wrong in her character. But isn't it very strange that the wrong qualities should be so deep that nobody ever saw them, and then, if they have been so deep as never to come up and trouble anybody, that there should be any harm in them?

"I don't mean anything wrong by this, my dear Mrs. Hamilton, and I hope you will help me to get rid of my doubts. Please excuse me if I have written my mind too freely; I only wanted to say what I thought, and have you set me right when I am trying to do the same for John.

"With love to Mrs. Benedict, I am yours, very affectionately, PHŒBE MAY."

The answer of Alice was a little note, containing one important thought for Phœbe to ponder over:

"MY DEAR PHŒBE: Your natural love for Mrs. Benedict is so intense that you cannot see any imperfection in her. Although she is really very lovely in person and character, yet you must remember that she has been brought up in luxury, and without a care, all her life, and the eyes of the Lord, which are spiritual, search very deep for qualities which are opposite to angelic goodness—qualities belonging to the nature which is of this world, and strengthened by the influences of the world.

"His is the love of a wise Parent for an immortal child—yours is the love of a grateful heart for a gen-

erous and devoted friend, good in its place, and worthy of being cherished all your life.

"One is a far-seeing Providence, which will permit no quality of the soul to pass without close scrutiny, that in the end the highest good may be gained; and the other is like the partiality of an earthly parent, whose vision is limited to the sweet and winning graces of the child, over whose faults she would spread a veil.

"You do not see the faults? We seldom do in those we love. But do we not see many faults in others? Are our friends perfect, and others imperfect, that we should question the discipline that comes close to us, and let the distant sorrows pass without a doubt?

"Keep fast hold of the Infinite Truth, that God's ways are not as our ways, because His love is higher than ours, and His wisdom is deeper than ours. He sees from the first to the last, and He is good!

"Do not hesitate, my dear Phœbe, to express your doubts freely to me always, because it is a most excellent thing to relieve yourself of troublesome thoughts in words to one who is always willing to help you. I am sure in this matter you will receive from the fountain of all truth the better help your good heart will seek; and I am sure you will be happy in the end to acknowledge 'the Lord is gracious, and full of compassion' TO ALL.

"Your friend, ALICE HAMILTON."

Phœbe took the thought faithfully home to her heart, to meditate upon it, as Mrs. Hamilton requested; and she pondered over it so successfully that she finally told John her mind was fully made up about Mrs.

Benedict and the baby's death; that God had been very kind and not unjust; and she believed it with all her heart now, although she had some doubts before; and she hoped if John loved her as he declared he did, he would never say again that good, or even wicked people were hardly dealt with when they were brought to trouble.

Phœbe had such a look of reverence in her face from some great truth which she had received, that John could not help admiring her for it, and so he promised all she asked. The gratified expression of her eyes, and the kiss she gave him, quite strengthened him for even a greater sacrifice than this of his opinion to hers.

Phœbe, the third watcher, certainly gained by the visitation of the angel called "Death."

XXI.

HAND in hand with the child was Paul now truly on his return home. He never for a moment ost the soft pressure of those guiding fingers, the joy- il sparkle of those loving eyes. He felt assured at ast that Gordon was not the friend to help him, be- ause his influence was so opposed to that of the hild's—the one or the other had been the truer guide o a better life; and could he doubt for a moment to vhich he owed his present hope of heaven? He was ittle likely to fall again before the fascination of his rilliant but worldly-minded friend, when the child's rayer at his knee was always in his memory.

He had entered Gordon's sick-room on that miserable ight—it seemed long weeks ago—a strong, self-suffi- ient man; and the evening came when he had prom- sed to go again, but this time he was more as a child, asking for protection and strength against temptation. The children and Helen knew that Paul had gone to visit the friend from whom he had returned one night so changed, so unlike him they loved, and notwith- standing all their confidence in his resolution to avoid for ever the curse of his life, they could not be cheerful, in their fear that he might come home as before.

They would have feared the more if they had been sensible of all the spells called forth by Gordon for

Paul's forgetfulness of his sacred promise. Excited by the quiet will which never before had rebelled against his fascinations, Gordon surpassed himself in sophistry and wit. At any other time his brilliancy would have blinded his victim, as it flashed with despairing effort for destruction from the blackness of his enmity. But Paul sat calm and strong before the arts of false logic and bitter sarcasm which, under the cover of intellectual amusement, his friend called forth to do him harm. He refused the first taste of wine, and told the reason why; he smiled at the innocent raillery, barbed with secret scorn, which this resolution of his called forth from Gordon, and he never stirred a hair's breadth from his position, although so gentle and compassionate with his sick friend, when the last desperate effort was made to have a parting glass "for old acquaintance' sake," and for the restoration of Gordon to health.

Firm as a rock, yet full of grateful words and hopes for his friend's speedy return to the world which now seemed promising, Paul excited Gordon's admiration in spite of his purpose, but without pity, he would bring him down again from his manly position to the dust! Guarded and strengthened, the enemy did not prevail. Paul left Gordon's room that night as upright as he had entered it, and, not knowing the snares he had escaped, little knew, and never knew, the cause he had for gratitude.

The watchful Helen heard Paul's return—the steady step through the little entry to his parlor door. Then, bending over the stairs to catch a fuller confirmation of her blessed hope—a hope which bore with it a reward for all waiting—she heard the low humming of

one of the children's songs, and finally Paul's chamber door shut softly for the night.

With her hands clasped unconsciously, as she would have clasped them in prayer, Helen stole quickly to the children's room, and, kneeling by the bedside, whispered, "Dear uncle has come home, my darlings, safe and well;" but although she whispered, as if she did not desire to awaken them, yet she kissed them as she arose from her knees, as if they must be told all about the joy she was then feeling.

Their half-open and wondering eyes fell upon her as she continued: "Uncle is in his room, and light-hearted, I know, for he is humming one of your little songs. Oh, your mother will be so happy, so very happy now! How good God is to let us hope—to let us be so sure!"

The children, thoroughly awakened now by this outburst of gratitude and happiness, clasped their arms about Helen's neck as well as they were able without encroaching on each other's rights; and Rose exclaimed, "What a nice, dear aunty, and what a nice waking up, to let us know that uncle has come home so good! We are so happy, and he is so happy, and mamma will be so happy. Oh, dear me! I never shall go to sleep again, I'm sure, I'm so wide awake and glad." And May, quite as wide awake and full of enthusiasm as her little sister, asked if "to-morrow would not be a splendid time to talk with uncle about the present he had promised to give her when she wanted it."

Helen was a little alarmed at her thorough work in arousing the children's sympathy at the expense of their sleep, but she could only remedy the evil by

shortening their excitement; so she kissed them both, and unclasped their hands from her neck, while she said, "Now, good-night again, and try to go to sleep, because we must all be very bright to-morrow morning, when uncle will be so bright. We shall have to ask for our present to-morrow, I am sure, and we shall have it, little ones. If you don't go to sleep, I shall think it was very naughty in Aunt Helen to wake you up to share her joy." But Helen smiled very brightly as she spoke of her wrong-doing, while the children protested against her "being naughty," and called her all kinds of endearing names.

Helen finally drew herself away from the little flatterers, and bidding them go quickly to sleep, if they really loved her, she left the chamber with the elastic step of one whose heart is young again after years of sorrow.

In the morning the children awoke with the birds, and Helen, also awaking early, heard them talking over, with child-like earnestness, the happy news which she had carried them the night before.

She found that it was questioned very seriously by little May; "It might have been all a dream," she said. And it was amusing to the listener to hear the sister's stout rejoinder, and her undeniable argument, that "it would be very funny if they had both dreamed the very same dream." Rose went even so far as to say that May "was a very silly little girl to think of such a thing." And then, happy to be convinced even by this imputation upon her own wisdom for having conceived such an idea, May gave up the fable of the dream, and acknowledged with delight that "Aunt Helen must really have told them all about it."

"To be sure she did, you little precious!" replied the affectionate Rose, rather sorry for the "silly little girl," which nothing but the importance of the question, "Did we dream? or did we not?" would have made her utter; and after this the discussion turned upon the present which was to be asked for "the moment uncle gave a chance."

Helen heard a recapitulation of her own directions about asking for the present, and the use it would be put to, which showed how faithfully they bore in mind her words.

For an hour or more the little tongues kept up an animated prattle, sometimes carried on so fast, and with such a mingling of each other's words, that Helen could not catch their meaning. There were few commas or periods in their eager declamation, and it was interspersed with short snatches of tunes, which, however harmonious in themselves, made the whole the more unintelligible. Helen loved to listen to the sweet medley of words, and songs, and laughter, but she called to the children to jump out of bed and come to her to be dressed.

They were glad to hear the summons, and, springing out of bed, they ran into Helen's room, and gave her a hearty "good-morning" kiss.

May, with some little doubt still lingering in her mind about the reality of her good news, was the first to exclaim, "I thought it was a dream about last night, dear auntie; but Rose says that I am a very silly little girl to have thought of such a thing, and so I've made up my mind that it was every bit true, and it wasn't a dream at all; it wasn't, was it, auntie?"

The child looked eagerly into Helen's face, as if for

a final settlement of the lingering doubt that troubled her in spite of a better faith; and Helen answered, as May hoped she would, and as Rose "knew" she would.

It was Helen's smile that answered beforehand the following question she put to the children: "Did any one come last night to awaken you out of a nice sweet sleep? How wrong it was to do so! Come, tell me who the person was like, and what did she say that made it seem like a dream to May?"

"Oh it was a darling somebody, who was not bad at all, and never was in her whole life," said Rose, who entered into her aunt's pleasantry with all her heart, for she had all along been sure that she was right; "she was a very pretty somebody, and very good indeed; but she wasn't an angel, such as comes to children in their sleep, for she had a pink muslin dress on, just as somebody right here wore all day, and she had a breastpin in her pink ribbon, with 'Aurora,' and something else in figures, and I could find it in that box, if I should look; and she had a white, soft hand, so nice to kiss—and kiss—and kiss," Rose kissing Helen's hand between her words. "I am sure that the somebody was just as pretty as you are, dear auntie, and just as good as you are, dear auntie, and just as—"

"Oh stop, stop!" cried Helen, laughing at the little chatterbox, as she fastened the clean white apron around the child's waist; "it is very fortunate that you cannot see my blushes while I am called the very image of the charming person who must have come to your bedside last night to wake you up. Your sudden awakening must have blinded your eyes. How is it,

May? did you really see anybody who looked like auntie when you opened your sleepy eyes?"

"Oh yes, I am sure I did now, for you look so smiling and happy that you must have known all about uncle's coming home safe and good, as we heard when we woke up. I'm so glad that it wasn't a dream! Isn't it nice, Rosie Posie, that it was truly Aunt Helen, and that uncle is good?"

"I knew it all the time," Rose replied, with the consciousness of superior insight, "and I never knew such a little goosey as May is, Aunt Helen, when she wants anything to be true, and is afraid that it isn't; she always makes me more sure of things not being dreams just because she talks as if they were."

"It doesn't seem to me as if May was much of a 'goosey,' as you call her," replied Aunt Helen, smilingly; "look at her, Rose, and tell me if she looks like anything but her own dear self?"

"Oh, I love her dearly," said the impulsive child, kissing May, with all her heart in the caress; "I know she isn't anything like a goosey, and I don't think it is a pretty word at all for her; but then she is such a funny little thing, always thinking over things, when I believe them right away. But you are a darling, pet little sister, and no more of a goosey than I am—are you, May?" and May, almost smothered by the embraces of Rose, vainly attempted to express her entire satisfaction at the *amende honorable* and the manifestation of her sister's love.

She was finally released from this durance by Helen's commands that Rose should be more quiet in her demonstration, and let May have a chance to breathe.

When they were quiet they attended to their usual

reading and prayers, and then were ready for their breakfast. After this, while waiting for Paul to return to his parlor, as he always did from his own morning meal, so as to enjoy a visit from his little favorite, they discussed the important question, "Shall May or Rose meet her father first, to ask for the present so much desired!"

Each was impatient to be the one necessary for this morning visit. But when Helen asked with her peculiar smile, so well understood by both, "Who loves mamma with all her heart?" May answered quickly, "I do, dear auntie, and I want Rose to go to uncle, if mamma would think it best." And then Rose, a little less quickly, and with a fainter voice, declared, "I love mamma, too, and I guess May better go, for I don't want to be selfish when it is wrong."

While they were talking the servant came to say that the uncle waited for his little friend, and the children looked eagerly into Helen's face for her decision, as to which should answer the summons. As her glance fell upon May, and her hand pointed to the door for her to go, Rose accepted the smile which her aunt gave her as a reward for her effort to be good. And when she was told that "Dear uncle had spoken first to May about the present, and this was the reason I thought it best to let her go," Rose replied, quite cheerfully, "Oh yes, dear auntie; and I will try not to be sorry at all." Then Helen made her happy by a game at bagatelle, while May went on her mission.

When her familiar knock was heard at the half-opened door, May was admitted by her father with as much fond haste as she had felt to enter. She was taken into his arms with a kiss of welcome, and when she was put

down, she ran to get the little cushion upon which she iked to sit at his feet. As Paul sat upon the sofa, nd May upon her cushion, he could look down upon ıe upturned face of the child, and enjoy all its passing motions. Now she placed her hands upon his knee, nd looked up to him with such an inquiring expression, ıat Paul desired to know "what his dear little girl was ıinking of, and if she wanted to ask him anything." Ie was sure, by the expression of the face he knew so ell, that there was something very weighty upon the ttle creature's mind, and she must be relieved of it at nce, as she was evidently longing to be.

"What is it, dear? Of course you are not afraid to peak to uncle of all you think and want?"

With something like the impulsiveness of Rose, so ıterested was she in her request, May rushed at once ıto the important subject; and, with her face all aglow ith her eagerness, and her eyes speaking more elouently than her mouth, she said, "Don't you remember, dear uncle, saying something once about a beautiıl present you meant to give somebody, when she anted it—a whole store full of playthings, if somebody anted them?"

"Oh yes! indeed I do, my darling; I remember it ery well, and this is what you have been thinking of so teadily ever since you came into the room; and this is hat you want of me, to go up town directly, and ring the whole stock down, as I promised you?"

"A whole store full of things! How funny you would look bringing it here," exclaimed the child, showıg a dimple and a row of pearly teeth at the idea of uch a package and such an expressman. "What a oad of babies, and dogs, and lambs, and baby-houses,

and kitchen furniture you would have! Wouldn't you look like Santa Claus? Only a great deal prettier than that old man, with his pipe and furs! I think you are the prettiest man I ever saw!"

"Oh fie! May-Rose, the prettiest man you ever saw? It can't be true—why I never received such a compliment in all my life! And after all, a pretty man isn't quite the best compliment you could give me. A pretty little girl is quite the thing—but a pretty man!"

"Well, dear uncle, you're beautiful, then. I really think you are, with such a beautiful forehead, and such nice eyes, and such—"

"Stop! oh do stop, for a 'beautiful man' is no better than before. Now can't you think who really ought to be called beautiful, for I can?"

"Oh yes," exclaimed the child, rapidly traveling the ground to her mother's side, and looking upon that lovely face, which was her type of perfection; "I know somebody that is always called beautiful, because she is, and yet she is so different from you, dear uncle—"

And here she stopped, being brought back by her last words to the consciousness of her father's presence and the danger of entering too faithfully into the description of her mother's charms. A little confused, the uncle helped her back to her original desire, through his own eagerness that she should not lose sight of the object she had in view:

"Come, my darling, we will let the subject of beauty drop, and I will consider myself quite flattered by your good opinion of my looks, without feeling hurt by the comparison I know you were making with your mother, whom I didn't mean at all, but am glad you admire so

much (May blushed guiltily), and let me know about the present, for I have such a curiosity to find out what is expected of me."

"Uncle," said the child, with emphasis, and folding her hands together upon his knee, as if for a decided talk upon the subject, again looking up wistfully into his face, "will you bring home a—oh I am almost afraid to ask, it is such a nice, very nice thing!"

The pretty anxiety of his companion was amusing to Paul, and made him more eager to gratify the dear little child, who felt such a delicacy in asking a favor. He took the folded hands in his and said, with a smile of encouragement, "What a present it must be! I am so anxious for fear that my money will not hold out. Is it anything to wear? Is it anything to eat? Is it anything to play with?"

"You ask so many questions all at once, I can't tell what to say."

"It isn't quite fair, I confess. Well, I will ask one question at a time. Is it anything to wear?"

"No, it isn't anything to wear."

"Is it anything to eat?"

"I am sure you couldn't eat it," said the child, laughing; "but it has something to do with eat."

"Nothing to eat, and yet something to do with eat!" repeated Paul, as if dreadfully perplexed; "it must be something very wonderful! But now for the last question: Is it anything to play with?"

"It will be very pretty play, and it will be in earnest, too," said the child, growing a little serious at the thought of her mother's object in wishing that the present should be given; "real earnest, uncle, but I suppose you would call it play."

"Play and earnest! why it grows more puzzling still. I am sure I can never guess."

"Well, then, I must tell you right away. The present is a real china tea-set, big enough to eat our breakfast and our supper off of; isn't that a present?" and the half-trembling May scarcely dared to look at the expression of her father's face, for fear of any dissatisfaction there. But she gained heart as her father quietly replied—

"A very pretty present I think I might make of it; but I don't see anything very wonderful in it to make my darling playfellow so unwilling to ask for it."

"Oh but that isn't all yet," replied May, looking up more anxiously than ever into her father's eyes; "for you must promise to have your breakfast and tea in this nice parlor, with my new tea-set, and let me pour them out for you, instead of the man in the white apron where you go. It's all out now, dear uncle, and you'll get the tea-set, won't you? And you'll promise to eat breakfast and tea with me, and I will play little housekeeper, and have everything so nice!"

The child's tongue was unloosed, and she told the whole story in a breath, hardly paying enough attention to her antecedents in her final hurry.

But Paul could not be particularly susceptible to her grammar, when her pleading eyes were so intently fastened upon him. He wondered a little at her strange eagerness, but soon concluded that it was simply the desire of a child to play at "tea-party" upon a somewhat grander scale than usual.

He was gratified by the earnest desire for his companionship which his dear little friend manifested, and remembering all her devotion to him in his sickness of

body and soul, he requested a few moments to consider this change in his habits, and then asked with an assenting smile:

"My little housekeeper, how will Mrs. Morant like the breakfast-table and the tea-table in my parlor, which will bring her so much care, even if I pay her well for it?"

During the pause when Paul was considering the child's request, May's heart was faint with fear that the great plan of drawing the dear father from his irregular life, and giving in its place the miniature comfort of a home morning and night, might fail after all. For the pause seemed very long and serious to the waiting ear. But her hope grew buoyant again at the smile and question, and she eagerly replied, "Oh, Mrs. Morant knows all about it, dear uncle, and she likes it ever so much; and she says she will make us some nice little biscuit every morning, or some toast; and it will be no sort of trouble; and she is so glad that you will have everything so clean and nice."

"Why, you are quite out of breath, my darling, with Mrs. Morant's approval; but I don't see why it isn't settled, if my good landlady and you are in such a state of willingness. You say that you must have a tea-set almost as large as life?"

"Yes! It must be a play set, but large enough for us. Oh, won't we have a beautiful, *splendid* time!"

The child's delight became quite contagious to the man, and Paul was soon talking over the particulars of the plan with May, in her own earnest style. Everything was settled to their mutual satisfaction; a note was written to Mrs. Morant, and entrusted to the child for delivery, as the first evidence of the uncle's

confidence in his new housekeeper; and then, with a farewell kiss Paul betook himself to a china store in the city, where he could be sure of finding the pattern he had in his mind.

Two hours after his departure a porter brought to the house a large basket, marked "For the little housekeeper, May-Rose, from her uncle, James Stewart."

"It always makes me laugh to hear dear papa Hamilton call himself Uncle Stewart," exclaimed little May, as she read the label; and Aunt Helen smiled too, as she saw the unsuccessful attempt to hide the beloved father under a stranger's name.

The children's delight exceeded all bounds as the basket was unpacked. They clapped their hands at every new piece displayed, and jumped about with joy. The usually gentle May actually disturbed her auntie's equilibrium as she was stooping to unpack the china; and the excited Rose made such an unexpected demonstration toward the kind landlady, who was assisting, that she too almost lost her balance. But with those arms about her neck, and "Please excuse me, dear, kind Mrs. Morant," spoken so sweetly in her ear, she would have excused a more dangerous sally.

Helen could not bear to check their spirits, and yet she was obliged at last to say, "We shall certainly break some of this beautiful tea-set if you are so wild! What will dear uncle think then of our carelessness?"

This was touching them in a tender point, and Rose exclaimed, "Oh, we mustn't break anything for the whole world. Now, May, we must be still—please do!"

This mentor of her more reliable sister uneasily followed her own advice; but when the whole was unpacked, dusted, and arranged upon a table to show all its beauty and completeness, Rose could not contain herself any longer; and asking permission for "just one good time over it," and the permission being granted, she took May by the hand, and made her dance around the table, singing the extempore rhyme:

> "Happy, happy May and me!
> Dear uncle and us are going to take tea."

"That's poetry, auntie, isn't it?" asked Rose, with a triumphant smile.

"Not exactly," replied Helen, laughing at the expression of satisfaction on the child's face; "poetry is generally more careful about its feet."

"Does poetry have feet, auntie? Well, I never knew that before!"

"I believe you, Rose. I will tell you that it has, however, although it stumbles very badly sometimes, as yours did just now. Still, I don't wonder at your attempt at something a little beyond the common, when this present is so beautiful and the giver so kind."

Paul had succeeded in finding the very thing he desired for the child to whom he imagined himself under obligation for care and amusement. It was of the richest china, of a large size for a play-house, but smaller than generally used for household purposes. There was no gilding about it; but each piece was decorated with rose buds, delicately executed and exquisitely colored.

During the day there arrived a small-sized silver urn,

from which the child could easily pour out the tea when she presided at table, a silver toast-rack, a butter-dish, two silver spoons and forks, and even some mats of the finest workmanship in straw, for any hot dishes that the little housekeeper might provide for the morning meal. And all the silver was marked, to the crowning delight of the children, with a monogram of "M." and "R." Both the children's names, and yet as one in their father's mind.

A little musical bell finished the table arrangements, which might be heard below if the servant were needed, but "which was principally designed," as Helen laughingly said, "to call dear uncle from any brown study he might fall into."

Then the brown study had to be explained, and "why it was called brown, instead of blue?" And so on, with prattle and merriment, until Helen told them the time had come for work.

Each now took her first lesson in presiding at the table as little housekeeper, under the aunt's direction. To be sure that everything was graceful and proper, the whole order of a meal was gone through with; at first very demurely by the charming little housekeepers, who understood the importance of their work, but afterward, as Helen so comically personated their uncle, there was many a merry peal of laughter, and chattering of tongues, as the teaching went on.

Mrs. Morant looked delightedly upon the little group, and thought, in her simple, affectionate heart, that the world could not give a prettier scene, and that such beauty and goodness could not fail of being crowned with happiness.

Under the direction of so excellent a teacher as

Helen, who was accomplished in all the points of etiquette which make the table orderly and pleasant, the children succeeded wonderfully well in their first lesson, as children might be expected to do who in their play always imitate the politeness and grace of their elders. And it was concluded, amidst great demonstrations of delight, that, if the dear uncle should agree to it, the pretty new tea-set should be used the next morning in his parlor.

Rose was permitted to go and wait for him when he was expected home that evening, and while she thanked him for the beautiful gift, requested him to take breakfast from it the following morning. The success of this evening's visit was great; for, after it was over, Rose came dancing into Helen's room with a pretty colored table-cloth, and two of white damask, with napkins to match, which uncle had bought, because his little housekeeper must have everything new and for her exclusive use.

Paul had willingly entered into the breakfast plan for the next morning, and Rose was eager to be put to bed, that she might sleep away the time before the happy hour. She was to open the domestic campaign, as May had seen her eagerness to do so, and was willing to wait until tea-time for her turn as little housekeeper.

Helen kept them as calm as possible, and succeeded so well that when May knelt to say "Our Father," Rose knelt also, although she had said her prayers at her father's knee, and she did not hurry her words, as she felt inclined to do. Rose did not, however, plead for her long last good-night kiss as usual, but quickly laid herself down in bed, and clasping May's hand, she shut her eyes down tightly, as if determined to go to sleep as fast

as possible. May did the same in sympathy. He left them with an inward blessing and prayer that t might not be disappointed in their anticipations of morrow; and she sat up late that night writing to mother all the details, which she knew would gra her, and give her hope in waiting so inactively w others worked.

XXII.

THE morning's sun peeped into the father's parlor, and there it rested upon the child in waiting, and the breakfast-table, perfect in all the appointments for this inauguration of a home. The little bell tinkled its call for the dear uncle, and as he opened the door of his bed-room, Paul stopped a moment upon its threshold to admire the picture before him—the pretty child, the tempting breakfast-table, and the morning sunshine touching all with the color of gold. Rose showed a child-like embarrassment as her father stood gazing at her with a smile; but with her own ready spirit she soon recovered herself, and springing to him received the kiss which was full of new delight to her, and then she led him with an air of consequence to his seat at the foot of the table.

It was a prettier sight than before, as the beautiful child, in her snow-white apron and curly hair, took her place at the head of that "play-and-earnest" breakfast-table, and then with such mimic grace did the honors of this first grand meal with uncle. The dimple in her cheek often came and went, with her changing states of roguishness and dignity, yet there was more quietness than could have been expected in her manner, and a sweet importance in the tone of her voice when in-

quiring of her father if "he would not have another cup of coffee."

It was all quite irresistible to Paul. He praised the coffee, begging to be excused for passing his cup so often, as it was rather small, and commented admiringly upon the biscuits, chops, and graham toast, in the gravest manner possible. Rose dropped a point of etiquette in attracting his attention especially to the butter, which she had been permitted to mould in a pretty shape for this occasion; and as this also received its meed of praise, Rose felt that thorough success had attended this first attempt at housekeeping with herself as presiding genius, and it would be very easy work for May to continue what she had so happily begun.

Her father interrupted the current of her thoughts by saying, "Now, my dear, I suppose you are no longer to be called my little nurse, but my little housekeeper; and a splendid housekeeper you will make, I know, when you have commenced so well. It may not be considered in poetical keeping with the occasion, Miss May-Rose, to allude to the cost of so excellent a plan as you propose for my happiness, but it seems to me necessary to enter into some negotiations with regard to the housekeeping bills, and we had better attend a little to business, even if it is rather commonplace." Paul's grand manner amused Rose very much, and she made an effort to appear all attention as he went on: "I tell you what I think would be best in this matter. Let me allow you just as much every week as shall pay for the nicest breakfasts and teas you can get up, and leave you something for yourself to spend in anything you like. Mrs. Morant will help you when you go to market, and

will help you spend your pocket-money when you have ever so many things to buy for yourself."

The child came very near saying that her mamma wouldn't mind about the money; for she had heard some allusion to the subject between Helen and Mrs. Morant, but as she began with "Oh, no matter about the money; I know dear—" the remembrance of the constant caution not to allude to anything she was not directed to speak of flashed across her mind, and she stopped short at the name of her mother, blushing painfully in her embarrassment.

In her childish fear she fancied that her father already understood the truth which lay so near her lips, but her fear was groundless; for how should he suspect this loving plot of the conspirators, when he had no idea of a design in all this devotion and daily care! All the sudden pauses, hesitations, embarrassments, half-finished references to father or mother, excited only pity for the innocent child, who was sensitive to a father's guilt, perhaps, and to a mother's sorrow. He loved the child all the more tenderly that she was trying in her simple way to keep a secret so well; and he, with the truest delicacy, covered her mistakes as he would those of a less innocent person in polite society.

He remembered that his twin-children had a father's guilt and a mother's sorrow to bear; and although this little companion of his must be much older than they, judging from her maturity of thought and manner, yet the trouble would be no lighter for this when they saw their mother's tears. He took no more notice at this time of the child's discomfiture than he had often done before, and the little housekeeper soon recovered spirit, as she saw no evil effects from her thoughtlessness.

She received, with an amusing attempt at gravity, the little purse that Paul had bought for her in anticipation of the plan he had just proposed, knowing that Mrs. Morant could not afford this private table without a liberal advance; and in it she found her first week's income, which she counted out with a smile, and put back into the purse with a doubt.

Paul had come round to her chair as the business had progressed, and now the question had reached such a point that Rose must run and ask advice. The doubt about the purse must be decided by Helen, and springing from the high chair by the help of the uncle's hand, which was holding her's at the time, Rose asked if she might "run and ask about the money?"

As breakfast was over, and the child was under the care of Mrs. Morant, Paul saw no anxiety in the request beyond what was proper, and replied,

"Oh yes, my dear; perhaps it would be well to consult Mrs. Morant as to whether this arrangement would be satisfactory. I am quite sure, however, if you tell her that I desire it, that it will be all right."

"Yes, dear uncle, but—" and Rose was gone.

Paul's face wore a very cheerful and contented look, quite different from the old, careworn expression, as he walked the room, casting a glance from time to time at the pretty breakfast-table and the child's high chair. The brightness of her smile and charm of her little important ways still lingered there, and the fragments of the meal happily gave reality to the otherwise fairy-like experience.

In the midst of these pleasant impressions Rose came running in, holding up the purse, and exclaiming, "It is mine, dear uncle. Mrs. Morant says it may

be! Such nice things as I shall buy you now—I am so sorry strawberries are gone; but then you don't know what I mean to buy to-morrow morning at the market; now, you can't guess with ever so many guesses. Wouldn't a—bouquet—be—nice? That is it!" But she suddenly stopped, and continued with a graver manner, as befitted the subject, "Dear uncle, will you be so kind as to get me a bunch of keys somewhere? Mrs. Morant said something about housekeepers having keys, and wearing them at their side. Can you get me a large bunch, please?"

"No matter what kind of keys, I suppose, if it only be a large bunch?" replied Paul, laughing; "well, I suppose I must find some—would safe-keys be the thing?"

"I think safe-keys would be very nice," replied the child, seriously; "if I must keep things all locked up, as Mrs. Morant says that real housekeepers do; if they are pretty small, I think that we can carry them about."

"We! Why, you are getting royal in your new dignity, my little housekeeper. But, come now, darling, and give me the last kiss before I go away for the long, long day. To-night we will have such a nice tea together. I shall look out anxiously for the hour, and be thinking all the way home what you have found nice for me. I sha'n't care much for my dinners now, with such a table as this spread for me morning and night."

The words delighted Rose, and when she had given the parting kiss, she followed her father to the outer door with a dancing step and, with her face all aglow from the joy in her heart, she stood there nodding

good-bye to him until he turned the corner of the street which hid him from her view.

It was now May's turn to look forward to presiding as little mistress in her father's parlor. All the enjoyment and mistakes of Rose were repeated over and over again during the day, but the hours seemed very tedious to May, who longed for evening.

Helen and Mrs. Morant exercised their talent to have the tea-table as tempting as the breakfast-table had been, and they succeeded even to the satisfaction of the anxious child who was to preside. She was more quiet than Rose had been in her outward manner, but she was all excitement and delight within, as she took her last survey of the table and folded her hands in silent admiration at every separate beauty. There was a tender look cast upon the little frosted cake in the centre of the table, for the dear mother's own hands had made it for this occasion, and to May it seemed to send out a smile for her when she was trying to help father come home.

Helen took an admiring peep at the whole effect just before Paul was expected, while May kept an eager watch at the window which commanded the corner of the street.

"He is coming, Aunt Helen, run!" exclaimed the child, as Paul appeared at the point upon which her eyes were fixed; and Aunt Helen disappeared up stairs.

Paul gave a glance into the parlor as he went into the inner room to prepare himself for tea; and he made haste when he saw that the child was waiting for him. In entering the parlor, May ran to meet him, and receiving her kiss, she led him to his seat while he

was expressing his delight at the new temptation spread out before him. May took her place, as Rose had done in the morning, and Paul thought to himself that the fresh timidity of the little housekeeper was very charming, and he hoped it would never wear away in the habit of presiding.

May, being naturally more cautious and quiet in her demonstrations than her twin sister, the pretty dignity she assumed was more easy to maintain, and so she made fewer mistakes than Rose. But Paul, believing that the same child presided at breakfast and tea, praised her increasing ease and grace, and congratulated her and himself on the success of their plan.

May tried to avoid all consciousness of uncle's belief that she had been his companion of the morning meal, wishing, with some pride, to tell her aunt and Rose that she was never once confused. So she kept back the smiles and blushes which some of his references to Rose were calculated to bring forth, and attended carefully to her duties as Helen had directed. She earnestly requested Paul to help himself to the peaches—they were nice—she had sprinkled the sugar on them herself; and the small, white hand passed the cup of tea to him with a steadiness and grace equal to her aunt's in the lesson up stairs. To be sure the table was small, and the manly arm opposite could easily help the progress of the cup, but still the little white hand needed steadiness and grace for its part of the work, and the duty was performed to the entire satisfaction of Paul.

What a wonderful chat they had together over that tea-table! What a wonderful disappearance of the tempting peaches, the golden butter, and the light, sweet

bread! And after this the cutting of that frosted cake, with the praises it received—if Paul had known that his own Alice had made it, and his own child sat there watching him while he spoke its praises, so unconscious of the love that guided the hands in moulding it!

No words can describe the influence of the hour upon the child and the child-man. Innocence and intellectual strength met upon common ground; forgetting sorrow and evil, the two enjoyed together all the purity and peace of the home-like scene.

It was a study for hearts as well as eyes when the misled father, coming back to his refined and elevated taste, entered unconsciously into the trap prepared for him, and found himself happier than for many a year in the sphere of that child's influence.

The child at the head of the table did more work with her innocent eyes than Gordon could undo again if he lived a hundred years in the trying; and the little hand passing the cup of tea was more powerful now than Gordon's, with its proffer of the wine which he knew so well how to make tempting and deadly.

Paul felt his gain in a very pleasant way, but never understood how narrow was his escape from another snare, subtly laid for his destruction, as this home influence was for his salvation. He knew that this pretty play with the child was more real than he had imagined it would be, and it formed a delightful contrast to the discomfiture and loneliness of his restaurant experience. And as they talked together, Paul told May quite seriously that he hoped she would not get tired of her plan, for he found it very satisfactory as he had such a taste for the order and neatness of home.

"And this is really elegant besides, my darling," he added, as, after the meal, Paul led the child to the sofa and took her upon his knee.

"But you bought all the pretty things, you know," replied May, kissing him again for thanks.

"And I see I am to have a bountiful return for my gift through my little housekeeper. But just at this time you are not to be my housekeeper, but my playfellow and pet; we are to have no more dignity until to-morrow morning. Oh, by the way, I have something in my room for you to commemorate the day; jump down, little one, and I will go and bring it."

May was eager enough to obey, for she was full of curiosity to know what could be the pleasure in store for her.

Paul returned with a box, which contained the whole history of his travels abroad with Gordon, in a series of photographic views, and also a little stereoscope, which the child could hold in her hand. "This is not all," Paul said, and going back to his chamber he brought another larger box, containing specimens of the various workmanship in gold and silver, wood and other material, which he had collected in the different countries.

With May seated beside him, Paul began to show her the views of these places in the stereoscope, and with them the specimens of workmanship peculiar to each place, when May started up, and going to the table, gave the bell a vigorous ring—"she came so near forgetting to call Kate," she said.

"What a faithful little housekeeper you are, to be sure," exclaimed the delighted Paul, at this flash of forgotten duty, "and after I had annulled your office for the night! Come, Kate," he said to the servant, as she

appeared, "make haste to do what the little mistress bids you, or I shall have no attention before bed-time comes."

May became a little embarrassed as Kate stood smiling in the doorway, waiting for the request she already understood; but tossing back her curls rather nervously, she said, "Please, Katie, put away the tea-things, and be very careful, won't you, not to break them—they are so pretty?"

The children were great favorites with Kate, particularly on account of the presents they were continually making her of the small fineries which servants like; and she now answered May with, "In course, miss, I will be very careful, and who wouldn't be with such fine things, and to please your sweet little soul besides?"

Not until the tea-things were all washed up and put away in a closet which Paul had given up to the child for her treasures, could May fix her attention upon the subject which Paul had brought up both for amusement and instruction. When Katie disappeared, the pleasure was fully entered into by both father and child, and the hours flew by so fast that the appearance of Mrs. Morant as a sign of bed-time was not a very agreeable surprise.

"Let her say her prayer and she shall come, Mrs. Morant," said Paul, with something like a sigh. "We had no idea, darling, that it was so late, had we?"

"I am sure we hadn't," replied May, looking up pleadingly at Mrs. Morant; "can't I stay a little longer, for uncle was just going to show me a pretty cross of gold he dug up himself a great way off?"

As there was no very urgent reason now for her strictness, Mrs. Morant retired, with the promise from May

that she would certainly be ready in half an hour more. "I will certainly go when I have seen the cross, and uncle has told me all about it, and I have said 'Our Father;' you know I will certainly go then."

Mrs. Morant knew that she would if she said so, and went away contented. It was a great change from past times.

May was delighted with a view of the mines and the history of the gold of which the cross was made, but more delighted when uncle bade her keep the ornament in memory of the day, and as a sign of his loving the beautiful prayer she had taught him to value. And, as May knelt to repeat the holiest and best of supplications, she held her little cross tightly in her hands, and tried to fix her mind upon the words as she thought how precious they were, now that her father loved them. And for the first time Paul bent over her with closed eyes and a devout heart, joining his voice with the child's as she offered up the evening prayer.

He did not feel ashamed to kneel in spirit with little May before the Lord; and as this crowning joy of the happy day was over, and Mrs. Morant appeared, the child clasped her arms about her father's neck, exclaiming: "Oh what a happy evening this has been, dear uncle, and you have said 'Our Father' with me, so that I shall never forget it, and the cross, too, and the pictures! What a dear, good uncle, and how much I love you, and how much I should like to stay a little longer, if I hadn't promised to go right away when Mrs. Morant came back!"

Paul, too, felt as if this had been a day never to be forgotten, and that he could scarcely love his own children better than he did this little one, clinging to him

with such sweet words; and after the child had left him, he felt strong and earnest to make himself more worthy of her affection.

The rest of the evening was full of thought. He would go to Alice in his new stature of a man, and ask her, with full confidence in her love, to forgive him all he had made her suffer; and until a late hour he sat musing upon the present prospect of reunion, and picturing to himself the faces of his children and the new light his presence might bring them.

The next morning, and the next evening, and morning after morning, and evening after evening, the happy current of Paul's life went on, side by side with that of the children. He still lived without suspicion of his wife's agency in his happiness, so guarded was every avenue against the escape of the truth. Gordon was no longer powerful to harm him, now that he was walking hand in hand with the little child; and although Paul visited him often, and pitied him, Gordon felt sure that the prey had escaped for ever, and he himself doomed to weakness and disease for life, although he had partially recovered the use of his limbs.

Paul would win heaven; and Gordon was knowing already the bitterness of everlasting death—the evil fruit he had cultivated for himself while he had been endeavoring to destroy the good seed in another—What shall a man gain if he lose his own soul?

XXIII.

A GREAT crowd of men, women and children were collected around a house where it was said a murder had been committed. With a pitiable curiosity each pressed upon the other for a view of some awful thing which the imagination had clothed with mystery, and had made painfully attractive. In the eager eyes of the crowd that curiosity was seen which, when rightly directed, is Heaven-sent for the progress of the human mind; here it was the low desire to see the face of a dead man, whose lips were closed upon the testimony why and by whom his blood had been spilt.

Very early in the morning a laborer had seen traces of blood upon the front of the house, appearing as if it had proceeded from a window on the first story, and awakened the inmates, in fear of violence having been done. The landlord, greatly alarmed at this idea, endeavored to have some communication with the individual who occupied the chamber designated.

The silence which reigned within during all their inquiries and demonstrations of alarm gave proof that the inmate was beyond all power to answer, either through insensibility or death; and coming to the conclusion that the door must be forced, the case was made

terribly plain. It was murder—and no voice to te the sufferer's story or the name of the murderer.

With the speed of lightning the news spread to th officers of the law and to the ears of the people. Th room with its dead was taken possession of by the leg authorities, and a crowd collected without at the sun mons of something new and terrible. "Who was he? "How was it done?" "Has the murderer escaped? was on the lips of all.

One man, delighted to be of momentary consequenc because he could tell something of the fellow-being s suddenly called to his account, exclaimed to greed ears:

"I know his name—his name was Gordon—he ha been awfully sick for months. I say it was worse tha the devil would have done, when the poor fellow wa in this plight, for a villain to come and use him up! say it was! To take a man's life when he couldn help himself!"

All around, in the midst and in the outskirts of th crowd, the speaker's righteous indignation met wit responses, "So it was," and "I'd like to be at th hanging of that fellow;" and for a moment the myste rious, attended by its attractiveness, was made horribl by the real nature of the deed.

"Do you guess what he did it for?" called some on to the man who had already given such valuable infor mation.

"I don't exactly know," shouted back the man o the moment, as all eyes turned in his direction; "bu money, I believe."

He was sure to be pretty near the motive, if he gav that which is said to be the cause of every evil.

"Why, had he lots of cash?" asked the same voice as before.

"They say he had a box half as big as a trunk, which he kept mighty close, and no doubt was full of gold," assumed the man, determined to sustain his character of knowing everything that could be expected of him; and then this man, like all others prominent for a time on occasions of excitement, was put aside and forgotten at the appearance of a police officer, who gratified the crowd as far as was consistent with his private instructions, and then called upon them to disperse, as they would in time learn all the particulars.

One by one the greater part of the crowd departed for the workshop or for home, leaving only those who still clung with morbid curiosity to the idea that they might see something or hear something to gratify their appetite for the horrible. But they too straggled off, one by one, as the coroner and jury sat with closed doors over the investigation of the midnight deed.

When Gordon's room was broken open—for it was indeed that unhappy man so suddenly dead to the world—there were exposed to view all the evidences of violence attending theft and murder. Trunks had been opened and their contents scattered around, as if the robber had been in search of valuables and had left this kind of plunder as beneath his notice. There was no money, watch or jewelry left, which Gordon was known to have possessed; traces of a desperate struggle for life were plainly recognized, and from a little pool of blood near the body there were telltale marks to the window-sill, from which the murderer had probably dropped to the pavement below.

We will not enter into the details of the examination or the unsatisfactory verdict. It was declared to be a murder; some singular appearances, in connection with the evidence of violence, puzzled the jury, although it was unanimous in its final decision.

From the leading proofs it was chronicled as murder by a person or persons unknown; a reward was offered for the apprehension of the assassin; two suspicious individuals were arrested, and finally discharged for want of evidence; it continued a nine days' wonder; and was then recorded upon the pages of Time as one of the unsolved mysteries of New York.

But how mysterious was all this to the man who had left Time behind him and had entered the portals of the Eternal? After the separation of the living soul from the dead body, where was the man Gordon, with his knowledge of his own story and fate? Was the struggle and the death blow, but just now so vividly impressed upon the consciousness, lost in the silence of the natural body, lying there ready for burial?

The man, Gordon, dead to the world, stood with his dreadful secret a living man among other living men, who, like himself, had left the world behind them. No annihilation or rest in the grave was there for him if he had hoped for a long or eternal forgetfulness of his bodily pain and reproach of conscience, if he had hoped to hide himself from his mortal or immortal enemies in the bosom of the green earth. The man was not dead because his body was lying there ready for burial; the immortal was not the less endowed with sight, and speech, and hearing, with thought and feeling, because the mortal clay, the simple dwelling-place for all these faculties, had been deserted.

This was the knowledge that came to dissipate the philosophical theories and unbelief of the miserable man, who, when in this world, had scoffed at the soul and had honored the body. Now that this body was left so powerless, he was amazed to find that the soul had been the man, and that he stood in human form, of spiritual substance, in company with the inhabitants of another world. If he had thought at death to forget all his misdeeds, he found them all growing more real to him; if he had thought to close his eyes upon a light that troubled them, he had opened them upon a light more searching; if he had thought to escape from the torment of his own ill-regulated affections, he had come into the very presence of his enemies!

But where were the Judge and the judgment—that terrible Being, with His cloud of witnesses, and that terrible Throne, looming up in the spiritual air, of which he had been taught in his childhood, and which had sometimes been the terror, but oftener the scorn, of his evil nature?

Lo! Before him opened the "book of his life"—forth from the memory of his youth and manhood trooped the cloud of witnesses, which were true and terrible. His own love of evil became the Judge which would condemn him to the consequences of evil; and from the throne of his own self-intelligence would be hurled the judgment, "He that lifteth himself up shall be cast down."

It was not the Lord—so plenteous in mercy—condemning him to spiritual death, when, from the past of his own soul, there crowded up all the murderous affections and thoughts which had been permitted to

kill and stone the prophets who had been sent unto him daily by the Father. No reproach could be just in the light of that world, where all things stood clearly revealed, excepting the reproach against himself for his blindness and hardness of heart. Heaven could not be moved by any false or despairing accusation, for it had been with sorrow, after loving patience, that the angels had withdrawn from the house wherein Gordon had taken seven spirits more wicked than himself.

The book of his life was then his condemnation—a just one, from which there was no escape; and page after page gave up the record which he had never dreamed would come to light from the secret recesses of his memory.

There was his boyhood and youth, unnatural in their disregard of all fraternal obligations and full of self-indulgence, bringing a whole age of grief to his mother's heart; and, after this, one history of passion, which had ended in the spirit, if not the deed, of murder.

The very scenes of his boyhood and youth came fresh before him; his English home, where he was born and educated, with its faint echo of an almost forgotten name—his own true name—laid away for a cruel purpose when his mother died; and then the picture of the place where he had met a fellow-man to settle with blood a foolish dispute, growing, through the excitement of wine, into a deadly one. And this picture was the same which again came up before him for accusation when the history of Paul Hamilton was connected with his own.

Weary of home, he had traveled to America, and there had indulged in every excess; there he had,

in a moment of passion, challenged a companion to meet him upon the very duelling-ground to which he had led Paul, in hope of a result even more serious than that which had attended his own murderous purpose.

After these scenes came the never-forgotten look in his mother's eyes as she lay dying, after his flight back to England to escape the ends of justice—that look so pathetic in its sorrow and its love had haunted him through all his after life, and caused every word of Paul's in reference to death-bed scenes to pierce him as a dagger of reproach. And with those dying eyes came the vision of a lovely girl who stood beside his mother's bed, ministering in his place to her need in body and spirit. He remembered how, for the first time in his selfish life, he had then desired to live for another—how he had enshrined this girl amid the idols of self, as a beautiful saint among the ugly gods of heathendom, and had been willing to begin a life with her at his mother's grave, which might make it to be the gate of heaven. But while the old, sweet dream of love was thus revealed, softening for a moment the present reality of his fate, the coldness and the darkness gathered around his hardened heart again as Alice Talbot's words fell with the old despair upon his soul: "The wife of a murderer? Do you ask me to marry you, with your mother's blood upon your hands, and perhaps a fellow-man's!"

And then his vow! Registered in hell. The vow that he would hunt down the man whom she should make her husband, and bring him to be the very thing she scorned with such righteous indignation at his misdeeds—that she should live to be a murderer's

wife, if he could bring about this sweet revenge by life's devotion to his purpose.

He traveled over again, step by step, the course he had taken for Paul Hamilton's ruin. The joy he felt to find one vulnerable point in his victim's character which he could use by the aid of cunning and treachery to further his ends. From the drugged wine in London to the duelling-ground there had been success, and then—a failure! Another, and another snare for Paul, all through the years of travel, and still escapes; as if the very powers of Heaven had been in league against his evil design, and the angels, finding a foothold in Paul's inherent love of good, had fought the enemy brought up against him, and had conquered.

The memory of the little child serving her father so faithfully was veiled to him, because he would have been tortured by anything so pure and innocent approaching his miserable soul, when it was exposed so fearfully to the light of truth. He had hated this child for using her charms against his own; and this hatred of the little messenger belonging to the opposing forces in the battle he had lost, would have given him the keenest agony now, if it had not been mercifully veiled for the time, until he should read the end of his earthly history.

His sick room revealed a terrible story of all the human passions which can torture man; there was the summing up of a life's disappointment and baffled revenge. Tortured in body and despairing in mind on account of his physician's unguarded declaration that the indulgence of appetite and passions had left very little, if any, vigor from which he could be built up into a strong, well man again, he resolved on sui-

cide. He reviewed the thoughts that led to this decision—that Paul would now be happy, united to Alice and his children, while he would linger perhaps for years, inactive, and alone with his bitter memories. But they should never pity his weakness in their joy; there should be another plot to deceive his friend; a halo of interest should encircle his death, while he escaped a vulgar pity for his lingering life. He remembered well the wretched satisfaction he had taken in inventing all the evidences of murder against himself, and almost bore again the pain of body he had suffered in carrying them out; calling himself brave, and secret, and triumphant to the last; and then finding himself trembling before the revelation of his infinite loss in the world which he had opened to himself by his own violent hand.

"A suicide" was the crowning condemnation of a wicked life; and the last page turned, he fled toward the companionship of his kind, for he had loved the evil and the false in his life, and in his death he was not divided from them.

How little did Paul realize all that memory was revealing to the departed soul as he pityingly followed the once elegant form to its last resting-place! Gordon had left no record of himself behind him, or of his hatred and plot for revenge; so, in after years, Paul only thought of him as a talented man, who had charmed him by his remarkable powers, and yet had continually put him out of conceit of goodness and sobriety by the brilliancy of his self-dependence and sarcasms upon humility; and Alice never knew that the indignant words she had uttered in refusing William Kell had brought

upon Paul's head and hers the long, dark night of temptation and widowhood. Paul's efforts to ferret out the murderer of his friend were unavailing, of course. Although he spurred the officers of the law with golden promises, the secret, on this side of the grave, was never revealed. So the halo of interest and sympathy lingered around Gordon's death for a time, as he had desired. His property was bestowed upon a charitable institution for want of a claimant, and the world cared no more for the man who had not left it one legacy of usefulness in thought or deed.

XXIV.

ONE more extract from Cornelia's journal, dated September 3:

"Yesterday was such a gala-day for us all! Alice, Helen, Phœbe, Uncle and Aunt Talbot, and, really best of all in enjoying their enjoyment, little Rose and May, came up from New York to pass the day with us. The boys were full of delight at seeing the children, and I was glad to find that little Robert had gained so much strength since we came up to C—, that he only had to take a short rest at noon to be equal to the others in their good time of playing and riding, such as they used to have together.

"The time was much too short for all that Helen had to tell us of Paul, and all that Alice had to enjoy with her little ones; but they must be back to the city for the tea in Mrs. Morant's parlor, and we had to be busy with our thoughts and words, so as to make the most of every moment.

"We not only gave the children a happy day together, but we discussed and settled the important question of Phœbe's marriage, which might be the occasion of bringing Paul home. John has been impatient for a long while, and Phœbe was obliged to admit that the time had come for her to yield. She was the more willing to leave us when we showed her the use we meant

to make of her wedding to bring about for us all a happiness something like John's, as we knew nothing would be so tempting to Paul, in his good state of longing for old companionships, as the marriage of his mother's young housekeeper, to whom she had been so much attached.

"John has risen, through his quickness of intellect and the faithful discharge of his duties, to be very near the head of his department; cautious, energetic, and full of cheerful spirit, he is as much a favorite in his new position as he was in the rank from which he started. It is quite time that Phœbe rewarded his faithfulness to herself, as the city government has his devotion to its interests.

"Alice and myself have undertaken the purchase and furnishing of a small house, better situated than the one now occupied by Mrs. Morant, and the mother goes with her son to her new home. Phœbe has no fear of this mother-in-law, as a part of her household, after the knowledge obtained through Helen and the children of her endearing qualities.

"We have to hurry matters considerably, for Paul has intimated to the children that he is making preparations to return to England, 'to meet a beautiful, dear friend he has not seen for many years,' and they have described how the 'dear uncle' looked when he spoke of his plan. Tears were in their mother's eyes, but a smile on her sweet face, as May told in her own quiet, tender way the very last words Paul had said to her that morning as she hurried her breakfast 'to go somewhere with auntie.' 'I hope you will have a good time, my darling, but'—with a beautiful smile in his eyes, as May described his emotion—'I mean you shall have a better

time very soon when I come back from Europe with my— ah, wouldn't you like to know with whom?'

"My precious brother, while you are indulging your bright anticipations of a voyage to meet your wife and children, we know the busy hands and happy hearts that are doing all they can to keep you fast at home.

"Yes, happy hearts, all happy. For, although I long at times till my heart aches for one more look at my baby's sweet face, I can enter into all the joy of Alice at Paul's coming home, and lose nothing of my own sisterly anticipation in the grief that has come to me. Sweet, indeed, and joyful are my anticipations of meeting Paul again! I knew that he was good! And yet why all these years of weakness and sorrow?

"Why should I ask how we are made strong? It was only the other day that this thought came to me, as I was looking over the entry in my journal written the night before my wedding. I was astonished to see the changes that seven years had made in my thoughts and affections, and what they had brought to Robert as well as myself. I little realized that night what the difference would be between the love of the lovers and the love of the married pair—what the discipline of life would do toward my true happiness. Since that pleasant 'good-bye to Cornelia Hamilton,' of which I remember every word with its ring of girlish joy—'my dear, we have had a pleasant time together for twenty years, but really I have no pain in parting, for I hope to have a still happier, and I hope a still higher companionship with the Mrs. Benedict of to-morrow'—how much I have known of disappointment and darkness of spirit! I have shed many a tear because of Robert's

apparent indifference, and have suffered many a he-
ache in trying to learn why marriage should be full
the prose and with little of the poetry of life.

"Beginning my real and best life when I was m-
ried, I see how the cloud and the rain have broug
fertility to the ground which continual sunshine wou
have made barren. After the dark days, the brig
ones; after the pruning of unhealthy growth, the joy
bearing fruit!

"Thanks be to God, I have loved my husban
and he has loved me through all the trials of wedde
life! The storms have uprooted the slender sapling
of my fancy and the surface flowers which appeared
beautiful; while the sturdy oak of my faith now she
ters me and all I love under its spreading boughs. M
great and strong faith—that life, with its spiritual da
and nights, is opening before us the Eternal Day, witl
out the night—that marriage, with its prose, is educ
ting us for the very poetry of Heaven. As I look bac
I see the gain in fact, through the loss in fancy—I s
the gain in health through the sickness.

"Was all this what I expected when I marrie
Robert? Would I have ventured on such a wa
watered by tears, and with a little grave left behin
me in the wilderness of my grief, if I could have see
all that lay before me? Oh yes! If I could have al
seen the gate of sunshine opening into the broad pa
I am traveling now.

"My husband and my boys! And my little chil
safe in heaven. Oh! happy wife and mother! led b
the Lord through paths she would not have chosen-
blind as she was to their heavenward direction—but le
by this infinitely wise Guide to a more substantial ha

piness than she could possibly have found in guiding herself.

"How gratefully I can exclaim, 'I will trust in the Lord all the days of my life!'"

XXV.

THERE was nothing to check the electric current of hope flowing from the hearts of Alice and Phœbe up town, down through the crowded thoroughfares to that humble house in that retired street; and the children felt new life put into their last hours of work.

How careless the little tongues grew as the time approached for the consummation of their plot; and how thoughtless Paul must have been to everything but his own anticipated voyage to England, not to have caught at the slippery words!

His own heart and mind were just as full of meeting Alice as hers of meeting him; and his imagination wandered off to every detail of that reunion, as the children's did to the wedding and dear uncle's going home.

Paul could wonder at nothing, when the great wonder of his coming happiness lay before him. He knew that Alice was still alive and well in her old home, for the acknowledgments of all remittances still came from there, through the secret agency which Gordon had contrived. But Alice had also carried out her little plot to deceive him as to her change of residence, as he had done to hide himself so long—that true heart was not so very far away!

And now the time had arrived when the question was to be decided—will Paul be tempted home by Phœbe's wedding?

This was the note that Cornelia wrote to her brother, and which was put upon Paul's plate before he came home one night:

"My Dear, very Dear Brother: I have found you after years of longing and seeking for you, and I cannot find words to express how glad I am, and how much I love you. There cannot be any necessity for telling you after this how I long to see you—will you come to me?

"My heart is so full and my eyes are so full that I can scarcely write. Oh say that you will come to the old home where we have been so happy—bless me with a sight of your dear face once more!

"If you still feel any desire to withdraw yourself from me, if you cannot be tempted by a sister's prayer, then come on Wednesday evening next, for dear mother's sake, for the sake of crowning by your presence the generous protection she gave to our dear orphan, Phœbe Grey. She is to be married then; and you know how mother loved her; and since this good friend left her, Phœbe has been keeping the house open and in order for YOU. I can say nothing more powerful than this to draw you to the home sanctified by your mother's dying blessing and prayer for your return, and the faithfulness of one who asks nothing of you as a reward for all her devotedness but your presence at her marriage.

"Will you come, dear, dear Paul, and make us both so very happy? You will! Oh yes, you will. You

cannot have the heart to disappoint so cruelly, by a refusal of her request,

"Your only and loving sister, CORNELIA."

Upon the little plate with its rosebuds lay the important note, around which clustered so many glowing hopes—the most important paper in all the world to those true friends who had lived so many years of courage, and now began to fear, as the hour drew near for Paul's return to his room where the note awaited him.

The cautious May was trusted with the tea-table upon this occasion, having received the most minute directions not to notice any emotion her dear uncle might show, but, if he explained the cause of his agitation in any degree, to do all she could in her childlike way to aid his resolution to be present at the wedding.

The child understood her work, and went to it with buoyant spirits; she was so sure that uncle would not refuse. But when she took her place and watched her father seat himself before the all-important note, in which lay a revelation and a prayer which would be so momentous in their results, May's little heart grew faint, and her eyes began to fill with tears in very anxiety to see what would happen as Paul broke the seal and read.

It was almost too much for the loving May to see how her father's face paled, and flushed, and paled again, while he held the note with a trembling hand, and took in as with one sweeping glance the beseeching appeal.

Again and again he read the tender call to the dear old home; and now tears were falling upon the paper

while he exclaimed in a broken voice, "My mother! and she blessed me at the last. Dear mother! dear, dear mother! Cornelia knew how to touch my heart—and dear Cornelia, too, my little playmate, my good little sister, oh why have I been so cruel to them both? Can God forgive me for such ingratitude? I never, never can forgive myself, for one is dead beyond all reach of my repentance, and the other has been robbed of a brother's care for years which cannot be recalled." Paul bowed his head upon his hands and remained a moment, perfectly silent, after this outburst of emotion; and then rising hastily from his chair, he walked to and fro, with his hands clasped behind him, in thorough forgetfulness of the untouched meal, and the little child almost breathlessly watching him. "Dear uncle," whispered the little May, at last, afraid to disturb him, and yet anxious for his attention to herself and the tea-table; but there was no reply. Again she repeated the loving title, and in a louder tone, but still Paul was too far away to hear the childish voice. Sliding from her chair, May ventured to approach her father, and walking by his side a moment, found occasion to nestle her hand in his as they relaxed a little unconsciously to take it in; and the soft touch brought Paul back to her at once.

"My little darling," he said, very tenderly, but sadly, "I have quite neglected you; please excuse me, dear, but you do not know how much I have had to think of since I read that note on my plate." Holding her by the hand, he continued walking to and fro, talking as if he were absent with his memories:

"My blessed mother! is it possible for her to know anything of the joys or sorrows of the dear household

on earth? But even if she cannot enjoy a sweeter peace for the knowledge of my return, I shall at least do justice to her memory, and satisfy my longing to recognize the goodness of her dear life on earth by being present at Phœbe's wedding. How kind she was to Phœbe, and how anxious she always was to compensate her for her dreadful loss of father and mother! Phœbe, too—she was just like a devoted daughter in return for this—I think I must go—yes, I will. Perhaps I shall not disgrace them now."

The cloud passed from Paul's face, a bright light came into his eyes, a smile spread itself about his mouth, full of the expression of his inward satisfaction; and, recognizing the pressure of the little hand fast closed in his as in sympathy with the joyful resolution in his face, Paul led the child to his seat at the table, and taking her in his lap, kissed her again and again, exclaiming, "I must take my guardian angel with me, if I go. I say, my little darling, how would you like to go to the wedding of another housekeeper, almost as good and pretty as mine?"

The child trembled a little, but found voice to say, "I should be very glad to go with you, dear uncle." It was not until after she had been talked to and caressed, to the infinite relief of Paul's full heart, and had taken her own seat again at the head of the table, that May realized all the joy without the pain.

Now it was time for the child's face to light up with secret delight, and the smile about her mouth was more significant of inward gratification than Paul could understand. The beautiful eyes were more brilliant than soft, now, in their glances toward the unsuspecting father opposite, and the delicate cheek was flushed with the

rosiest of hues as May poured out the tea and passed the cup with a hand unsteady with joy. The contents came very near being spilled upon the pretty table-cloth, and May apologized with—"You won't mind, uncle, will you, that I spilt the tea in your saucer? I was really so glad to go with you to the wedding that I was careless, wasn't I?"

"I am delighted to see my little housekeeper so pleased, and will excuse all mistakes to-night. I haven't been quite free from them myself, I am afraid, in my surprise at receiving this note. I am now going to tell you that a good many years ago I lived up town, in a very nice house. Perhaps you will know when you are older why I left it; it does not matter now; and in that house lived with us an orphan, very good and pretty, as I have told you before, and in whom we were all interested, not only because she had no father or mother—poor thing!—but because she was always wanting to learn about everything, and was always doing the kindest things for everybody. Now this good little housekeeper, as we always called her, on account of her going to market and looking after matters generally—this good Phœbe Grey is going to be married, and they want me to go next Wednesday evening to my old home up town to see her married. This is about all the story; and I tell you this because if you go with me, as I mean you shall—Mrs. Morant and auntie being willing—I want you to understand who Phœbe is, and that you must love her at once on my account."

Did little May laugh within herself at this introduction to the dear and faithful girl who had watched over her, sleeping and waking, about all her life? She laughed within, indeed, and the laugh broke out of her

rosy lips in spite of herself, while her father so seriously described her darling Phœbe.

"I guess Mrs. Morant and auntie will be willing," exclaimed the child, not even making an effort to hide her laugh, as she might have done some weeks ago; "I think I am sure to go, but what shall I wear, dear uncle? and next Wednesday night we must go very early, I hope, because I shall be in such a hurry."

The two points she had been directed to discuss, both out in one breath!

"What a vain little housekeeper, to be thinking of dress the first thing! but it is only the proper beginning of Miss May-Rose's entrance into society, I suppose; and as to going early, I agree to that at once, for I shall have to talk a little with Phœbe before the wedding, and give her the present I am going to get ready for her. I am glad you spoke about your dress, for I shall want you to look your very prettiest. Let me think;" and as Paul went on with his tea, he pondered over the subject, unconsciously falling into the trap which Alice and Helen had laid, in order to ascertain his desires upon the all-important matter of his children's dress at the coming festival.

Such a festival as it promised to be! Should not everything be arranged to satisfy both the heart and eyes of Paul?

In a few moments Paul declared his mind made up upon the subject, and said:

"You will have to go with me to a famous place where they can fit you out at a glance with such a dress as will best become my pure-minded and sweet little May-Rose—a white dress, with lace, perhaps, but no ribbons; everything of the best and prettiest in ma-

terial, but no glaring colors for my modest little girl. I shall bring you home on Wednesday afternoon some of the most delicate and sweet-scented flowers I can find, and auntie will trim your dress with them and put some in your curls. What do you think about it?"

"It will be very, very pretty, and you are very kind," replied the animated child. "Only to think! next Wednesday! I'm sure I don't want any ribbons, for flowers are a great deal prettier; I shall be so glad when it comes!"

"Heyday, little one! where's your dignity? see, you have spilt the cream!"

"Oh, no matter," replied May, looking only a very little abashed as she took her napkin to repair the damage; "it isn't any matter at all about a little cream upon the table-cloth, when we are going to have such a splendid time. Next Wednesday, next Wednesday! I am so happy! And who do you think will be there, dear uncle—all the folks you know?"

The child's bright eyes fell to her plate as she asked the question, but a smile was playing about her mouth. Paul was engaged at that moment in the absorbing occupation of cutting the loaf of cake before him, so he did not notice the peculiar expression of his companion's face.

"I don't know who will be there—probably very few people—I hope so, although, if I were to make up the party, I should really like to have a few there who would be glad to see me a man again, and would bid me God-speed on my way to England; but I can wait till I come back, and that would be best after all."

Paul said this to himself rather than to the child,

from whom he had wandered off again for the moment. But May had heard the words, and was ready to catch them up according to her instructions and to further the object of her question.

"Now I don't know who you would like, uncle, but I should like dear Mrs. Morant to go, and if she shouldn't be dressed very nice, we would like her just as well, she is so good and kind!"

"Indeed, you are right—we must have good Mrs. Morant, and auntie besides, if they will oblige me so much. Their care and their loan of you have saved me from death, perhaps, and I am sure from a great deal of sorrow, and we must take them with us." He added in a lower voice, "I must introduce them to the home they have done so much toward making mine again."

"Well, uncle, anybody else?"

May was getting perplexed in her work. What more could she say to find out the names of any kind, dear friends of her father's during his exile—this her mother desired to know—so that they might join in his happiness and hers after the sacred joy of the first meeting was over.

"I think not, darling; but when I return from England," and here Paul's face was almost radiant with the smile the words called forth, "then I shall have some friends who will be glad to meet me and rejoice with me; they can wait a little while, my dear—only a little while!"

"I wonder who they are, dear uncle? are they very nice?"

"Curiosity, as well as vanity in my little housekeeper! But that, too, belongs to your sex! Well,

little one, I will gratify you by telling their names, although you will soon forget them, because you never saw the good old gentleman, nor his nephew, but you may one of these days. The good old gentleman is Mr. James Stuyvesant. I met him a good while ago, and he would have been a friend indeed if I had been willing; and the nephew is named Herbert Percival; isn't it a pretty name?"

"Mr. James St—uy—sat, Hurb—but Purse—val," murmured the child to herself, frightened in her heart for fear she should lose the sound of such formidable words; and, suddenly springing from her chair, she exclaimed, "I shall be gone only a little while, dear uncle; I will be right back."

At these words she disappeared through the door, and hastening to Helen's room, she burst in upon her with, "Mr. James Stuvy—sat, and Hurb—but Purse—val, Aunt Helen—those are the names; please remember them for me, for I almost forgot them coming up stairs!"

"Why, my dear, you are quite heated by running so fast; be quiet a moment, and then tell me if uncle was glad to get the note, and what he said."

May stopped for breath a moment, as she had been directed, and then not very quietly exclaimed, "He is going, dear auntie—uncle is really going to the wedding! He said he must, and he would, and he would take me, too—it was so funny!" and she was only checked by her aunt's waving finger from giving the whole house the benefit of her merriment, which ended in a suppressed run of laughing notes, sweet as a chime of bells. "It is so funny, too, that dear Mrs. Morant must go, and you, dear auntie, and those two

names, you know, because mamma will want to have them, for uncle says they are very nice; and I am to have a beautiful white dress, which uncle is going to buy me, and flowers to trim it with instead of ribbons. But, oh dear me! I must run right back, for I only came up to bring you those long names before I forgot them;" and before Helen could speak the child was gone again.

Helen pondered over May's story, only longing for the time when she should come back to give her more quiet information of her father's state. Still, she had enough to satisfy her until May's bed-time, in the hasty declaration that uncle was "really going to the wedding;" and her hands were full of Rose, who was eager to have more explained than Helen knew herself.

Then she sat herself to work at the directory, to find out the names to which May had given the clue, and she succeeded in finding them, much to her satisfaction. She copied the address of each to take that night to Alice, when the children should be in bed.

Meantime the little housekeeper had returned to her duties, and the prolonged meal being fairly over, Paul found his companion in a wonderful flutter of spirits, and was obliged to resort to a quiet talk upon subjects a great way off from the one exciting topic, both to her and to himself, in order to prepare the child for her evening prayer and the sleep that would follow.

The child was restless after all his pains, for she was thinking how anxious auntie would be for the particulars of the important news she had given so hurriedly; and beside, she wanted to talk all her delights over with

Rose, without whose sympathy she could not enjoy even this wonderful day's work.

Paul was not sorry when May left him somewhat earlier than usual, for he was weary with the burden of his thoughts and the exciting prospect opening to him of seeing Cornelia so soon. He had intended bringing Alice and the children home, and making his sister's joy and surprise complete at once by coming to her himself with all his treasures; but this occasion of Phœbe's marriage had come to change his plans. Perhaps it was better so, for they could make all ready for his wife's reception, and the dear old home could be a little modernized for his beautiful Alice. To relieve the pressure of more serious thoughts he passed the evening in planning new furniture and decorations for the new home he was going to offer to his wife.

Helen was listening a greater part of this time to May's carefully-told story of her father's emotion and final decision; and afterward, while the children were chatting together in their bed about the dresses and flowers which were to be "exactly alike because mamma would buy one just like the one papa would buy," the faithful aunt left them for the first time at night, and went up with John to bear the precious tidings to Alice.

The consummation at last! and the color went out of the very lips of Alice as she listened to Helen's recapitulation of May's words. A few tears fell over the recital of Paul's part in the affecting scene; but the heart which had borne in such patience the years of waiting, received in sweetest peace the tidings which were the harbingers of her happiness. No cry or outbreak of emotion could be in harmony with that face

and figure, so beautiful in the repose of deep affection, never moved by storms.

The sisters, in saying "good-night" as they parted, loved each other and rejoiced in each other as never before; for they had been patient and faithful to the last in trusting that the Lord would bring them out of their afflictions, and they recognized together the Hand that lay upon their heads in blessing, now that their work was over.

XXVI.

THE day of the wedding dawned—as the children had feared from the heavy rain of the previous evening—dark with clouds; but the sunshine broke out at noon, as if in more glorious fullness for the disappointment of the morning. It was just such a day now "as they would have made," so Rose said, "if they could have been old women and swept even the cobwebs from the skies. I really believe the sun came out on purpose to say, 'I mean to shine just as brightly as I can for Phœbe and you.' Thank you, dear old sun!" and Rose nodded gayly to the sunshine streaming into the window, while May, not to be behind her sister in the matter, pretended to put her arms about the dancing rays and kiss them, repeating the words of Rose, "Thank you, dear old sun!" adding in a moment, "I don't wonder, auntie, that people used to kneel down to the sun, as uncle told me they did once, for he's splendid, isn't he, when he comes out just as you want him?"

"He is certainly very obliging to-day," replied Aunt Helen, smiling upon the happy children; "but it warns us to be getting ready, Rose, as you and I are going very soon, so as to be off before uncle comes home."

"I'm sure I want to go, and I don't care how quick you are in getting me ready," replied Rose, eagerly. How the sunshine seemed to laugh at the two white

dresses upon the bed, and how it sparkled on the carriage door as it opened to take Rose and Helen in! and then how it winked, as if so knowingly, at the package lying upon the seat, in which by and by Rose was to appear "just like May!" and then, some hours later, how tenderly it rested, as if with a softened light, upon May, and Paul, and Mrs. Morant (auntie had begged to be excused from going with them), as they entered the carriage for the drive up town!

Paul was very thoughtful, but he could not resist the cheering picture opposite to him, a picture so full of beauty and joy—May, in her white dress and curls, her sleeves looped up with delicate blue flowers, and long sprays of the same twined in among her ringlets, so as to peep out here and there like soft blue eyes watching for admiring glances to rest upon the lovely head they adorned. All this beauty flashed as a vision upon many a passer-by, and some wondered what festival the child was going to, that her face should be so radiant, and her curls so dressed with flowers, for the eager little head was often out of the window to see how far they were on their way.

Only a few moments more, and she could throw off all restraint and appear to uncle as his own little May. Only a few moments more—for there was Union Square—and she could call him "dear papa," if she could but overcome the habit of the "dear uncle" which she had been obliged to call him, even with Aunt Helen. Only a few moments more—for Union Square was passed—and she could say everything she thought of without stopping to consider if mamma would think it right. She was really going home; that was dear uncle opposite, and that was Mrs. Morant by her side.

No wonder that she was almost wild with eagerness and delight, and that her father sat there wondering, and brightened by the vision before him!

As the carriage entered the street where she knew her mother was awaiting them with such a happy heart —she realized nothing of that mother's real feelings— May half rose from her seat as if to be ready for a spring when the carriage should stop, but her father sat her gently down again, telling her that they were not quite there, although this was really Madison Avenue, which she seemed to know very well. "Oh yes," replied the little May, smiling and blushing; and she held the hand which had so gently seated her, fondling it as she always did when she was very loving.

His own emotions now became too powerful for his control as he approached the old home; and when the carriage stopped, his hand trembled so in May's that the child was frightened, and the eyes which had been so eager were troubled by the alarming change in her father's countenance. Mrs. Morant helped herself out of the carriage, for Paul was without power to assist her; and the child, springing out, flew up the steps, and had disappeared when he entered the house.

The servant requested Paul and his companion to walk up stairs, where they would find the ladies. Paul, trembling in every limb, went up the familiar stairs that led to the sitting-room of the family. He was not, however, even at such a moment forgetful of little May, and he asked Mrs. Morant, with a look of alarm, where the child was. Mrs. Morant was about to reply, although embarrassed by the question, when Paul suddenly bounded from her side, and taking two steps to the landing above, clasped his sister Cornelia

in his arms, where she sobbed and laughed until her husband became alarmed at her emotion, and begged Paul to release her, and try to calm himself for her sake.

For a moment neither could be influenced by anything but the overflowing tide of love and memory; all the pent-up affection of those long years of separation burst forth, sweeping away for ever the barriers of false shame which Gordon had built up between them; and no wonder that, for a time, there was danger of mishap coming with the mighty flood. By and by the flood would become a river, flowing gently on, and bearing them to their "desired haven." Robert, excited by fear of Cornelia's health, again besought them both to be calm, and finally led his wife into the sitting-room, where he tenderly seated her upon a sofa, saying to Paul, "It may be too much for her, if she indulges herself in such sobbing and laughing. She must be quieted. Pray help me to soothe her; she is not very strong."

As if the man just back, like the prodigal, to his father's house, just receiving the gifts of love and pardon, could suddenly check the current of his gratitude and become as calm as Robert desired!

Cornelia at last realized her husband's anxiety, and she gradually became less and less excited; while her husband watched her now, very wisely saying not a word. Paul's agitated walk became slower, and at last, to Robert's infinite relief, he sat down, quietly resting his head upon his hands.

For some little time not a word was said by any one; the flood was stayed whose current had been so mighty and strong, and now the gentle river was flowing on

so very, very pleasantly! So softly, so softly, oh pleasant waters of peace after the storm!

Then Cornelia spoke quite calmly, but Robert was afraid with too much feeling: "Paul, dear Paul, it is such happiness to see you home again! I have my brother once more, and the past is to be forgotten; that belongs to the sorrowing hearts we have carried about with us so many years, not to the happy hearts we are blessed with now; the future seems so bright to me that I can scarcely realize the clouds that have passed away. And our mother, Paul, she blesses us, I know, as we meet here to-day, so like the loving children of her earthly home, when we all participated together in its joys and sorrows. I am sure she is the happier for your coming, Paul, and smiles upon our gratitude to God."

"It was her voice, Cornelia, that seemed to call me home," replied her brother, with deep emotion; "in your note I saw her name, 'dear mother,' and, as I read, the memory of her very voice came back to me so powerfully that I heard, 'Paul, Paul,' like the old, tender tone, when she would try to win me back from wrong to right. I could not put it away; and I am here, won back, I hope, for ever, from wrong to right."

"Dear, good Paul! Noble and true, as I knew you were."

"Noble and true, my darling, only as God has of His own nobility and truth given me to see my way and listen to all voices which will tell me of my duties to Him and to mankind."

"Oh, Paul, my brother, found indeed!"

Then Cornelia remembered Alice. Rising suddenly

from her seat, she exclaimed, "This is inexcusable, that I have forgotten everything in my own delight;" and she continued, in a sweet voice and manner, like her own self again, "Robert and Paul, you have never met before; will you be brothers for my sake?"

Each stepped toward the other as she made this appeal, and shaking hands warmly, looked and spoke their full consent to Cornelia's loving request.

"I have never met you as a brother before," said Paul, "because I have not been worthy of the name; but perhaps I may prove my right to the title, now that Cornelia forgets the past in her hope of the future."

"I am a man of little demonstration," replied Robert, pressing the hand which he still held, "but there is a sincere welcome in my heart for the brother of my wife, both for her sake and for his own."

Then a pause!

"We will have Robbie and Paul in now," said Robert, to his wife, pitying her secret emotion; "Paul must see our children."

At their appearance, the feeling which had been stealing over Cornelia so painfully was changed to one of pleasure and pride, as she witnessed Paul's delight in the boys. But after all had been said that could gratify her maternal heart, and their father had told them they might go and finish their play with their young friends (Paul little suspected who these young friends were), then again a painful silence fell upon the group.

"I have brought one of my guardian angels with me," said Paul, in a cheerful tone, noticing a shade of embarrassment stealing over Robert's and Cornelia's

faces, perhaps it might be the shadow of some new emotion connected with the memory of the absent wife (she was in Paul's mind, too, but with nothing but sunshine around her), "and this angel is in the sweetest form of flesh and blood that mortal eyes ever rested upon. If she can be found, Mrs. Morant—" and his alarm again returned—"why have I been so careless of her? Mrs. Morant—my sister, Mrs. Benedict," hastily introducing them, and again returning to the fear he had at the child's disappearance—"Mrs. Morant, I beg of you to see at once what has become of May! I am exceedingly anxious about her."

Cornelia stepped forward and pressed Mrs. Morant's hand, with a world of meaning in the smile with which she said, "I am happy to meet my brother's friend."

And again the paleness spread over Cornelia's face, and the smile died out as Paul repeated his anxious demand:

"Mrs. Morant, I pray you to go at once and see what has become of May!"

Paul began to sympathize with a strange emotion that was stealing over all. "What does this mean?" he asked, looking from one to the other; "is it about the child? has anything happened to May?"

These hurried questions broke the spell, and Robert answered, "Nothing has happened, I think;" then he whispered to his wife to leave the room with Mrs. Morant, and he would follow presently; "Let them come in five minutes," he said.

She obeyed the request, and casting one look back as she went out of the door, she saw her husband draw Paul to the sofa, where they both sat down.

"I have good news for you, Paul," said Robert, quietly.

"My cup is nearly full," replied Paul, looking up with a smile; "what now, Robert?"

"There is a steamer due to-night from England."

"What!" exclaimed Paul, starting up; "are you left here with me to break the news that my wife and children are coming here to meet me? Tell me, Robert, oh tell me if Alice is on her way? And my children! are they with her? Oh Robert, Robert, fill my cup to overflowing; tell me that the blessed news is true!"

"Sit down, Paul, and be calm" (how grateful Robert was that Cornelia was not present!) "while I bring you confirmation that your cup is overflowing indeed."

Paul sat down, hiding his face in his hands, for the tears were flowing fast at these joyful tidings, which brought to him a prospect of reunion so unforeseen and overwhelming as completely to unman him.

"Now—" said Robert, as if about to explain the whole matter to Paul; but instead of doing so, he quietly slipped out of the room, and there glided in the three beings who were of all the world most precious to Paul.

Alice and the children! The mother in the dress Paul liked the best, and looking like a bride, with the orange-blossoms in her hair, and the children also dressed in white, with the flowers Paul had chosen.

They stood before the husband and father a moment only, when Paul exclaimed, without raising his head, "Oh, Robert, go on! Is it possible that I deserve all that I anticipate in my coming joy!"

A little voice softly whispered, "Papa." A little hand nestled in his own.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Paul, starting violently at the voice and the hand; and, removing his hands from his face, he looked up. Was the treasured picture in his memory made a living thing before his eyes in all her youthful beauty and girlishness? Was that young creature in her white dress, and with her hair crowned with flowers like a bride, a vision of the days long gone by, when he had stood by the altar and had vowed eternal constancy to Alice Talbot, so fair, and youthful, and good?

Oh how fair, and youthful, and good the image of his fancy appeared as she stood there, smiling upon him! "Speak! oh speak to me, Alice, my wife, my darling!" he called, with a beseeching voice, before the vision should fade, and he opened his arms imploringly, as if he hoped some loving power might mercifully change the beautiful fancy into flesh and blood.

Alice did not speak to him, but she came into those extended arms, her real, warm, and loving self, and they closed around her as if no power but that of Heaven could take her from him again; and he trusted in Heaven now so gratefully, for it had blessed him.

Alice, too, trusted in Heaven very gratefully, as her heart lay close to Paul's, knowing no pain.

A moment of wondering joy and silence on Paul's part, and then kisses poured down upon the brow, and cheek, and lips of Alice, a rapture of feeling which could not disturb the sweet, sweet peace of her soul. She had prepared herself for this meeting, but Paul was completely surprised. He was trembling in every nerve; he was beside himself with joy, and yet no word, only kisses and that tender, strong embrace. But the lips of the happy must speak, and so Paul mur-

mured "Alice!" as if he would have her confirm her presence by her voice.

Alice answered in one word, "Paul!" spoken as tenderly as the day when she had promised to be his wife; then he knew all the history of her love for him and her forgiveness; then he was silent in a new prayer to heaven.

Alice was the first to speak: "Paul, I have waited for this hour in patience, for I knew that it would come. I am happy, Paul, very happy, and I would lie here in your arms for ever if I could forget that there are others to love and others to serve;" and as she spoke, she withdrew herself from him with a kiss upon his lips as tender as his own, and two children sprang into his arms—his nurse, playmate, little housekeeper duplicated before his astonished eyes! His lost guardian angel, and still another, as sweet and fair!

Alice took a seat beside Paul, and while her eyes were fastened with overflowing love upon the group of father and children, the one so full of amazement, and the other so full of mirth at this amazement, she said, with a little tremble in her voice: "It must not be a secret any longer, darlings, for dear papa is very much perplexed. Tell him that his own twin children have been by turns his nurse and housekeeper; that each has soothed and amused him; and that each has thus done something, which, aided by his own good heart, has led him home."

Paul was silent; he had no words to express his new wonder and joy; again he feared this must be a vision which might fade. These little ones he had known and loved, his own? Was it not then a dream after all? No; for there was Rose with her arms about his neck

emphatically kissing him over and over again; and there was May, fondling his hand in hers with her gentle tenderness.

"I see it all!" at last exclaimed the happy father; "this rapturous kiss and this fondling of the hand—they reveal more to me than words. My little May-Rose! But which is May, and which is Rose, for I suppose that the double name must be divided now between my darlings?"

Alice smiled, and asked, "Will you say, Paul, which you think is May and which is Rose?"

Before he could reply the sweet lips close to his face whispered, "Say I am Rose, dear uncle, for they sha'n't trouble you any more!"

The whisper was heard by May and her mother, and the former was a little disappointed that the question should have been settled without a chance of mistake: "That was too bad of you, Rose, to tell, when uncle was looking so funny, trying to think which was which; I wanted him to call me 'Rose!'"

"I am not uncle any more—don't forget—I am 'papa,' 'dear papa.' Oh, you do not know how sweet that word is to my ears;" and Paul looked at Alice for her sympathy in this new happiness.

"I understand how sweet it must be," replied Alice, to the look. "Paul, these have been my messengers to you; my carrier-doves, with a budget of love hidden under their wings; how I have loved you all these years is seen in them and their mission to you. In their beauty I have rejoiced for you; in their obedience I have rejoiced for you; and in their education I have rejoiced for you, because they would all prove attractive to your eyes and heart, when they could find the

suitable time to act. Influenced by them without knowing your relationship to them, you were left in freedom to accept that innocence and truth, and confirm them by your internal love; your natural affection could not in this case have the power to deceive you into believing that you loved the innocence and truth they brought, when you were really loving the children because they were your own."

"Of all women the dearest, and wisest, and best! You believe my reformation now is genuine, and upon a true foundation, because it springs from an internal and not external source; because spiritual and not natural love has been stirred deep within me by the ministration of angels within and without?" And as he spoke, there was mingled with the reverential tone of his words such a tenderness that the eyes of Alice filled with tears; and she answered by kneeling down at his side and bowing her head, with the prayer, "Thy truth, O Lord, is made clear before us! Let the harvest of good works be plenteous after all Thy wonderful care and mercy. To Thee be all the glory, and the praise, now and for ever." Alice then arose from her knees, her face glowing with the holy satisfaction of having acknowledged the Father in heaven, from whom came all the sunlight resting upon their heads, all the peace resting upon their hearts, and to whom should be returned "the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever." She kissed her husband and her children, and sat down again by Paul's side, drawing his hand from around May's waist and fondling it, as the child had so often done. It seemed as if after this act of devotion, in which Heaven had been acknowledged as the source

of all her happiness, she could most fully enter into all that earth now offered for her acceptance.

A light came into her eyes and a smile to her lips that were all for Paul and the children; and she asked, in a bright, cheerful tone, "Well, my dear Paul, what do you think of us all, after our grand conspiracy?"

"Think of you all!" replied Paul, admiringly, "that you are beyond all the fairies of past or modern times; that you are more to my mind than any heroines of romance I ever read about in poetry or prose! But how was it possible that all of you could have the ingenuity to keep me in ignorance of this for months?"

"It was all mamma and auntie; they were always writing and writing about what we should do and what we shonld say. Oh, they are splendid, dear papa!" answered May, with a loving glance at Alice. And Rose added in her decisive way, "I'm sure it was a good deal, dear uncle—dear papa, I mean—for he didn't mind my mistakes a bit when I made ever and ever so many, and I was most sure he would!"

"How could I, or how could any other man in my place, suspect such a deep-laid plot as this? And now, how can I show my gratitude for all your love and patience, Alice, and May, and Rose, except by a new life devoted to God's services and yours? You will see—"

"What shall we see?" exclaimed Cornelia, entering the room at that moment, "but a most selfish forgetfulness of everything in the world but yourselves! Did you know that you came here, Paul, to attend Phœbe's wedding, and she is waiting to introduce you to John, and hear what you have to say to her for keeping your house in such good order for your return. Come,

Paul, for you can't be making friends with those two children upon your knees, when you have seen them so often before!" And Cornelia, as she stood by her brother's side, looked down upon them with beaming eyes, expressive of all she felt in their reunion and her own deep happiness.

Paul kissed the children and put them down. Then turning to Alice, he said, "Come with me, my true, dear wife, for we must go together now in every work of joy or sorrow; I owe a debt of gratitude to Phœbe, and you must witness the payment of it. My darlings, you must come too."

Cornelia led the way to the guest chamber of the house, which had been given up that day to the bride; and the meeting of Paul with the faithful little housekeeper was very tender, connected as she was with the memory of his mother's kindness of heart and patient care of the orphan girl. Paul kissed the blushing cheek with brotherly feeling, and said, as he hastened to take from his pocket a little paper-covered book, "Phœbe, I thank you heartily for the home you have kept so well for me, and I know that nothing can repay you so well as your own satisfaction in having done so kind a work; please me, rather than yourself, then, by accepting this bank account of five thousand dollars, the interest of which must be devoted exclusively to yourself as pin-money, which every new-made wife demands." He then took a check for a thousand dollars from his pocket-book, and put it into her hand, adding, "This, Phœbe, is to buy some forgotten comfort, or luxury, for your new housekeeping; it must be spent at once, or it will not keep: I have settled it so!"

Phœbe could not smile, as the others did, at Paul's

cheerful voice and manner. She was overcome by the generous heart beneath it all, and, seeing only that, she was serious over her sudden wealth.

The mother and the son! How they were united in her love and gratitude! Tears came into her eyes, and forgetful of the thanks she might have been expected to return for Paul's munificent gift, she said at last, "The dear old times come back again, dear Mr. Paul, as I see you again. Your mother is not far away from here, I am sure, for she couldn't be with all she loved at home together. If she can hear me now, she can hear me bless her; if she sees me now, she can see me happy through her goodness, and through the goodness of her son she always loved. I am crying only because I am so glad for her at what has happened to-day. I, who owe her so much, ought to feel my own happiness to be most in her happiness, and I do! I do! Oh, my dear Mrs. Hamilton, you took me to your dear, kind heart when I was all alone in the world, and you gave me a home like this—a home like this! Yes, indeed, Mr. Paul, it is a home now, for even your angel-mother to come to and bless, with you, and your wife, and your children, so good and beautiful!" Phœbe would have given up here entirely and left the room, if she had not been arrested by the clear, impressive voice of Alice, and she could not lose a word from her: "How we sometimes long for the first days of the Church on earth, when no doubt men and angels talked with each other face to face! What a crown of joy it would give this blessed hour if the angelic faces of those we love could smile upon us visibly! But we may be sure of this—that although darkness and silence come between us and them, because we are in the natural world, and be-

cause of our natural eyes being adapted to that world, yet there is nearness of spirit and undying love above and within the earthly darkness and silence; and these bring light and voices to bid us believe in the presence of the angels and of God. This faith will compensate us for the absence of that visible beauty and goodness to which memory is so true."

Phœbe through her tears murmured, "I believe the angels themselves couldn't have put the truth any better than that, and I mean to remember it all my life; and no one can cry any more, I'm sure, in believing what Mrs. Hamilton says;" so Phœbe looked the delight that Alice's words had brought her, and turned to introduce John to Paul, again blushing and as demure as ever.

"I have seen your face before," said Paul.

"Perhaps," answered John, with a smile.

"Perhaps," repeated Alice, her eyes wandering to the children with an expression they well understood.

"I rather think you have, papa!" exclaimed Rose, running to her father and taking his hand, while with her other hand she beckoned for John to draw nearer. "This is our dear, good Mrs. Morant's John, papa, her son, who lived in the house with us; and you used to see him sometimes, although you didn't know and didn't suspect he was the one who was going to marry Phœbe. Oh it was so funny, how you used to meet him and never think that he was John!"

"Yes, Paul," said Alice, "and he was the first one who found you for us. I have a great deal to tell you by and by how we have watched for you, and how you have been cared for since you were found; that long story will come by and by, as I have said. John has no time now excepting for your congratulations, for we

must be thinking of making ready for the arrival of our guests; only a few, Paul," seeing his look of regret that he might be expected to meet a company of friends. "I think the few, the two or three, we have invited will not trouble you, even in your present mood of enjoying quietly the happiness of coming home."

Paul thanked her for her consideration, and, at her request, he followed her and the children down stairs to the drawing-room, unconscious of the new surprise in store for him.

Alice, opening the door of the drawing-room, led her husband to a sofa, upon which was seated a smiling couple, whose old-fashioned garments and snowy hair contrasted quaintly with the modern coloring of the room and the rich damask of the furniture. As Alice and Paul approached them, they made a motion as if to rise; but Paul, with a quick step toward them, prevented this, and pressing the hand of each warmly, he expressed his great surprise and satisfaction in seeing them: "I little thought to see you on this side of the Atlantic, my dear uncle and aunt! But your presence here to-night adds another pleasure to my already brimming cup of joy."

"We came because we could not stay away from our sweet darling," replied the old man, with a look of fatherly fondness resting upon Paul's wife. "When Helen told us she was going to America to see her sister, I said, 'Jeannie, have you heart enough to go across the sea?' and she said 'Yes,' and here we are!" And the old gentleman's companion, in her new white muslin cap and handkerchief, so proud and happy, responded, "Yes, here we are, and you look surprised enough! I hope you're glad?"

"Glad indeed!" replied Paul, shaking hands again with both emphatically; "but who is this, Alice, standing by your side? I have seen her before. Oh yes! the aunt—of May!" Alice had her arm about the lady's waist, and was kissing her in the most affectionate manner. Just then the children came along, and Paul, detaining them, said, pleadingly, "Mamma is puzzling me. Don't let her trouble me any longer, Rose; you know you were my friend when you whispered 'Call me Rose;' now who shall I call this friend of mamma's?"

"Oh don't you know that it is Aunt Helen? Why she was at Mrs. Morant's with us all the time; and hasn't anybody told you all about her yet?"

"Nobody has told me anything, as yet," said Paul, with mock despair; "how am I to know about this complexity of good things, if somebody does not at once give me permission to know Aunt Helen—if this is according to the plot?"

"I have known you for a long time, dear Paul," said Helen, introducing herself by putting her hand in his; "I am Alice's sister, and you will never know how I used to tremble when we met by chance, for fear you would think me so like Alice;" and Helen, as she spoke, looked upon her sister with a smile; for no greater contrast could be found than between the tall and noble-looking Helen, and Alice, so feminine and graceful, with her small figure and fair but strongly marked face.

Paul took each by the hand, and addressing the old people upon the sofa, said, "A fine pair of daughters, Uncle and Aunt Talbot, as one might wish to see! But no danger of mistaking one for the other, I think,

or of seeing a resemblance, when my eyes were dulled by ignorance of their presence in the United States. What do you think?—was there any danger of my knowing Miss Helen to be the sister of my wife?"

The happy old couple laughed, and praises of each poured forth from their loving hearts, while they agreed with Paul that in face and figure they were so unlike, that the secret of relationship was safe in Helen's presence.

After a moment's further talk with Helen upon the all-engrossing subject of her labor of love, although Alice had forbidden any talk at present about the matter, Paul left the group, to look upon the dear, familiar things of his boyhood's home. He greeted every picture as a familiar friend, and was lingering before the crayon sketches of his children, taken when some years younger, when there was a light touch upon his arm, and turning round to his wife, whose hand he recognized, he met Herbert Percival, face to face, and heard him say, "Lillian, my dear, this is Paul Hamilton, our friend!"

Gathering together his grace and politeness as quickly as possible, for in his surprise he was in danger of losing both, Paul bowed to the lady, and then to the gentleman, scarcely conscious if it were expected of him to be more demonstrative; but in a moment the flood of feeling poured back that had been so powerful at the duelling-ground, and, "Indeed, this is delightful, Percival!" broke from his lips, while he shook Herbert's hand as if to renew the "friendship for ever" of their last strange meeting.

"My wife and I think it is so," replied young Percival, heartily; "I believe that Lillian has dreamed of

this ever since we received our invitation to be here to-night; and as for myself, you know how I honor you, and how glad I must be to meet you in your own house and under such pleasant circumstances."

Bowing again to Mrs. Percival, Paul was just about to commence an acknowledgment of her kind regard for him, when Alice again attracted his attention to herself, with, "Paul, here is Mr. Stuyvesant, waiting for an introduction to your wife and children; we have no time for explanations or reminiscences with Mr. and Mrs. Percival, for Mr. Stuyvesant says he must have a word with us both before the bride comes down."

Then Paul received his old friend's congratulations with a respect and affection due to the interest Mr. Stuyvesant had felt for him during that memorable voyage, and in the words, "My wife, you must know this good friend of mine, for he would have saved me, if he could have done so, from many an hour of sorrow and absence from you," he expressed so much regret for the past neglect of his friend's kindness as would have satisfied amore exacting heart than that of good old Mr. Stuyvesant.

"My dear young man," he said, cheerily, "let the old things go, for everything is new to you now. I called upon your wife the other day, after I received her note about this happy occasion, and we fully understood each other—didn't we, my dear Mrs. Hamilton? We both believe in you thoroughly; and I am more convinced than ever that the companion you had on that voyage was a worse enemy to you than your love of wine. There was something about that fellow that was wicked, I am sure; I watched him often, and he had his eye upon you strangely. I never could tell the

kind of interest he had in you, neither could I tell why I doubted him, but doubt him I did."

"He is dead," replied Paul, solemnly. And then his voice changed very suddenly, "While I, Mr. Stuyvesant, am happy—happy beyond all words, beyond my merit or my dreams. Gordon's work is done, whether of good or evil; I hope that my work is hereafter to be the work of good. I have gratitude enough to lead me to such work, and a helper always at my right hand, who has studied all her life what is best to be done." Paul here took his wife's hand, and placed it in Mr. Stuyvesant's, as if he might realize its power —that small, brown, strong hand—to guide him in all ways of Christian love.

But there was now no opportunity for further words upon the subject, for Robert Benedict appeared to announce the coming of the bridal party, and all must take their places as had been arranged. Robert then went back to wait upon Cornelia and Mrs. Morant to the drawing-room, and, as he left them, Alice said to Paul, "There is a man who has learned to idolize his wife after years of apparent indifference. He does not say much now, but he realizes Cornelia's worth as few husbands realize the worth of their wives, and he makes her very happy."

"And you, no doubt, had something to do with this charming state of things, through the wisdom of your wonderful little head," Paul replied, with a glance of mingled admiration and pleasantry upon his wife; and he added, in a more tender tone, "Alice, I am very glad that you have remembered my taste, even to the arrangement of your hair; nothing could make me love you better than the simple knowledge of your

faithfulness to me all through my desertion of you; but, although I have had no opportunity to say anything about this before, you cannot imagine how deeply touched I have been by this white dress and these curls, in their quiet testimony to the memory of my pride and delight in your personal loveliness. I thank you, that in both you have brought back to me your youth and your own peculiar grace."

"There's no time for compliments," Alice replied, with a loving smile, and an effort to suppress the tears which Paul's unexpected tenderness had started. "I am very glad, my dear Paul, that you are pleased." She could not trust herself to say more; and calling the children to her, she directed them to their places, saying that Phœbe and John would soon be down. Then, putting her arm within that of Paul, Alice walked toward the other end of the drawing-room, where the bridal party was to stand, while Rose and May followed, a little subdued by the arrival of the clergyman, and a certain seriousness which fell upon all.

Robert, Cornelia and Mrs. Morant appeared with the two boys, who were directed to take Rose and May and stand upon the right of the bridal pair, while Alice and Paul were to stand upon the left.

As Phœbe entered, leaning upon John's arm, her face was covered with blushes. It was her first appearance in state and honor before the family she had served so long, and her new position embarrassed her at first; but she was far from being ungraceful or confused, and it affected all the lookers-on to see how she was struggling with the emotions of the time and place.

She seemed somewhat reassured as the children, with Alice and Paul drew nearer to her in taking their places;

and then the service commenced which was to make the faithful little housekeeper and patient lover one.

The orange wreath and veil trembled a little, once, as Phœbe thought that perhaps her married life might prove as long a waiting for good as Mrs. Hamilton's had proved, and that perhaps she might not find it at last; but John had noticed the trembling, and suspecting that it might have come from some "question" in the dear girl's mind, he answered it by a loving pressure of his arm, which promised protection from every sorrow.

Phœbe happily understood the answer, and after this there was no more questioning. She believed it very unkind to John to think that he could ever fail her, after all his devotion to her and to her friends. She resolved to rest in the present and in the past, and let the future remain as it was—veiled by the merciful hand of God as to its great issues of joy or sorrow.

The significant "Amen" fell not only on the bowed heads of the newly-married pair, but on the reunited hearts of that faithful wife and profoundly grateful husband. Another marriage than that by outward rites had been consummated in that happy home; one at which the parties hoped there had been angels present for the witnesses, and the blessing from the great High Priest—a marriage which Paul and Alice prayed most fervently might prove the marriage of the *Inner Life*, making them one for ever.

THE END.